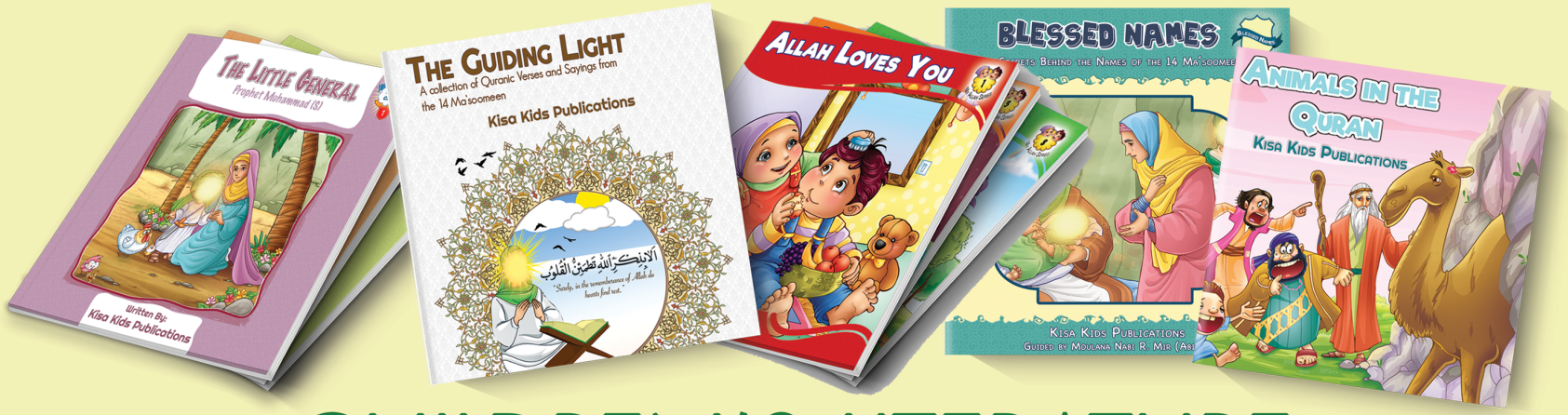
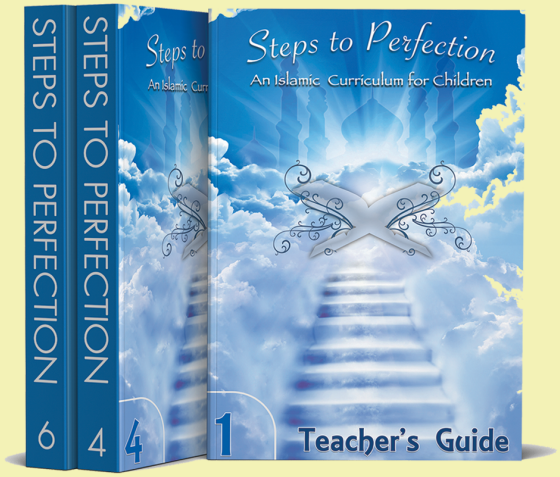
AL-KISA FOUNDATION

UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

MUHARRAM 1439|2017 PROJECT BOOKLET



CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



ISLAMIC CURRICULUM

ISLAMIC PROJECTS

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Letter from Maulana Nabi Raza Abidi

Salaamun Alaikum,

May Allah bless and give strength and tawfeeq to you, your families, and your communities. My name is Nabi Raza Abidi, and I am currently the Resident Aalim of SABA center in San Jose.

Over the past few years, after visiting many centers around the US, I noticed that Alhamdulillah, we had great Sunday Schools, but there was a lack of programs catered especially towards children during regular Masjid events. Therefore, in Muharram 2013, we piloted a structured children's program, which consisted of a speech and simple crafts, parallel to the main program at SABA. Alhamdulillah, the program was a success, so the following year, we took it to the next level by creating lesson plans and projects centered around the main themes of Muharram.

Next, we expanded the children's program to Shahr Ramadhan, Thursday nights, and every other main program in the Masjid (e.g., wilaadahs, shahaadahs, etc.). When we saw that the children were benefitting tremendously, we began sending the lesson plans out to different centers and received positive feedback, Alhamdulillah.

In 2016, with the tawfeeq of Allah, we launched Kisa Kids (www.kisakids.org), which focuses on providing Islamic curricula, Islamic literature, and Islamic project resources for children.

Alhamdulillah, last year, we piloted the Muharram Project Colelctive and received great feedback. Thus, for this upcoming Muharram 2017/1439, we are happy to launch the second annual Muharram Project Collective. The kits in this package include 10 speeches and lesson plans that have been put together in collaboration with scholars and educators, as well as project supplies for the activities.

Our humble request is to create a two-way connection by all of us sharing our expertise and experiences and avoiding duplicated work, in order to maximize our potential. Please share your ideas, experiences, and successes with us, so that together, we can all move forward and build a global network, inshaAllah.

JazakAllah,

Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

AL-KISA FOUNDATION

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Muharram Project Kit Tutorial

Salaamun Alaykum,

May Allah bless you, your family, and your community, inshaAllah. We pray that He accepts all of our efforts in trying to instill in our children the love of the Ahlul Bayt (A) and the message of Karbala.

InshAllah this Muharram kit is a small step towards our children embodying the characteristics of the Ahlul Bayt (A) and developing a relationship with Aba Abdillah al-Husain (A).

This booklet contains the following:

- 10 project lesson plans
- 10 speeches with museebat
- General guidelines for speeches

The activities and speeches have been divided by day and correlate with each other.

In the kit, you will also find that each box/bag is labeled according to the day. We have tried our best to include all the supplies you will need for the project of the day. However, we request that you purchase enough of the following supplies, based on how many children you have:

- Markers
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Scissors

We suggest that you look over the project for each day ahead of time and attempt to create a sample project, so that children have a point of reference.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at info@kisakids.org. We would love to hear any suggestions, feedback, comments, etc. Please also send us any pictures you take.

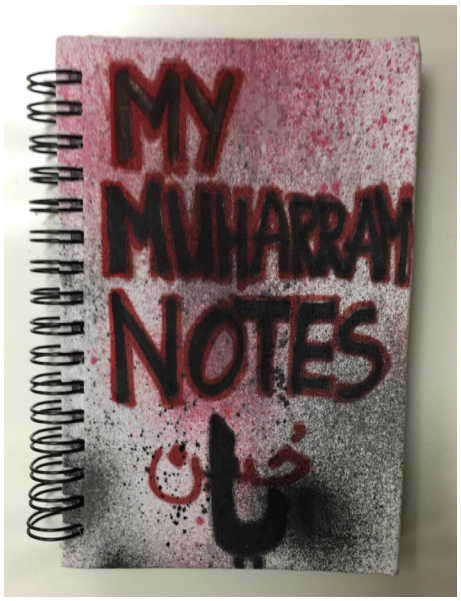
May Allah (SWT) grant us all the shifa'ah of Imam Husain (A) on the Day of Judgment and allow us to uphold his message.

With Du'as,
Kisa Kids Publications

LESSON PLANS

Project #1: Muharram Notebooks

Objective: Students will learn about the importance of taking notes and create notebooks they can use to write notes during the Majaalis.



Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

- DIY Notebooks (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-white-canvas-spiral-notebooks-a2-56_9084.fltr?keyword=diy+note-book)
- Sharpies/markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure:

1. On the first night of Muharram, give students an overview of the next 10 days. Talk about how for the next 10 nights, and some nights after that for the next 2 months, we will gather at the Masjid to remember Imam Husain (A) and the important lessons he taught us. When we hold these gatherings, they are called Majaalis.
2. **SAY:** Does anyone know when the first Majlis was? Sayyidah Zaynab held the first Majlis to spread the message of Karbala and tell others what happened to Imam Husain (A) and his family and friends.
   We hold Majaalis every year to remember the sacrifice of Imam Husain (A). We also use this opportunity to learn and grow about our religion so that we can learn how to make good choices and become closer to Allah. Allah loves it when we hold Majaalis. He loves it because Allah loved Imam Husain (A) and wants us to remember him.

   During the children's program, we will be having a short speech and an activity to help us learn the different message of Karbala. During the Majaalis, to make sure that we actually learn something and put it into practice, and to help us remember what we learned, we should take notes. Let me share a story with you!
3. **SAY:** One day, Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (A) gathered his family and said, "You are children today, but will be the leaders of tomorrow. So, work hard to learn and gain knowledge. If you cannot remember what your teacher says in class, take notes, so you can review them whenever you need." [Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 1, P. 110]
4. **SAY:** Today, we will be making our own Muharram notebooks! During these 10 nights, take notes each night. (Optional: At the end, if you show us your notebook with your notes, we will give you a prize in return!)

   You can decorate the cover of your book to remind you of Muharram and Imam Husain (A). What are some things we can write on the cover? (Together, brainstorm a list on the white-board)
5. Pass out notebooks to each student. Allow them to use Markers and sharpies to decorate the cover.

Project #2: Tree of Faith

Objective: Students will learn how to develop into strong Muslims, using the tree as a metaphor.

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- Tree kit (http://www.orientaltrading.com/standing-tree-of-thanks-craft-kit-a2-48_3163.fltr?)
- Sharpies/permanent markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure:

1. On the white board, draw a tree, with roots, trunk, branches, and leaves. As you progress through the lesson, write the examples students give in the respective places.
2. **SAY:** Who can help me label the different parts of this tree? (Wait for answers.)
3. **SAY:** Good. A tree has roots, a trunk, branches, leaves, and sometimes, even fruit. Now, in order for this tree to have strong branches and a strong trunk, what does it need? (Wait for answers.)
4. **SAY:** Yes, exactly! The tree needs strong roots! Now, what if I told you that as Muslims, all of us are like trees. In order for us to grow strong trunks and branches, we also need strong roots. Now, what do you think the roots of a strong Muslim are? Remember, can you see the roots of a tree? No. Just like that, the roots of a Muslim are in their hearts, where you can't see them. (Wait for answers)
5. **SAY:** Great answers. In order for someone to be a strong Muslim, some important roots he/she must have are Taqwa (remembering Allah), Tawakkul (trusting Allah), and Imaan (faith and belief in Allah). Now, if these roots are strong, the trunk of a Muslim will also grow strong. What do you think the trunk of a Muslim might be? (Wait for answers.)
6. **SAY:** Excellent answers! The trunk of a tree is what takes the nutrients and water from the roots and delivers it to the branches. As Muslims, the trunk of our is Wilaayah or belief in the Prophet (S) and Imams (A) as our leaders. You see, they are the ones who help us turn our faith and tawakkul into actions. They show us how to make good choices. And in turn these good choices are like… (Wait for answers.)
7. **SAY:** Yes! They are like our branches! Everyone can see the branches of a tree. With our strong roots, and with the help of the Ahlul Bayt, we can make good choices and do those things that Allah has asked us to do. What are some examples? (Wait for answers.)
8. **SAY:** Great! Praying Salaah, eating halal food, fasting in Shahr Ramadhan, going to Hajj, and being kind to our parents are all examples of wajib actions that are like the branches of a Muslim. Now, if a Muslim has these strong branches, then he/she is able to develop beautiful, colorful leaves. These are like our mustahab actions that we can do. Who can give me some examples?
9. **SAY:** Excellent! Helping others, giving charity, cleaning the Masjid, being kind to others, and reciting Du'as or all excellent examples of mustahab actions we can do if our roots, trunk, and branches are strong! These are all lessons that Imam Husain (A) taught us. Because his faith and tawakkul were so strong, he was able to stand against Yazid on the Day of Judgment and protect the truth and save Islam! InshaAllah we can all learn from this and make those good choices and strengthen our roots so that we can also serve our Imam! Today, we will be making our own trees as reminders for ourselves!
10. At this time, pass out the tree kits and sharpies. Students can refer to the board for what they can write on the different parts of the tree.

Project #3: Compass Bracelets

Objective: Students will understand the importance of Imaamah and turning to the Imams (A) as our guide for success in this dunya and the akhirah.

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- DIY Compass bracelets (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-compass-bracelets-a2-56_9087.fltr)
- Sharpies

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure:

1. Hold up one of the compass bracelets and ASK: Does anyone know what this is? (Wait for answers.)
2. **SAY:** That's right! This is a compass. Does anyone know what we use a compass for? (Wait for answers.)
3. **SAY:** Exactly! A compass shows us the correct direction. Just like we need a compass to show us which is the correct way to get somewhere, we also need guides to show us the correct way to get to Allah. Does anyone know who these guides are? (Wait for answers.)
4. **SAY:** Yes, great responses! The Prophet (S) and Imams (A) are our guides in this world! They show us how to make good choices and do those actions that will make Allah happy and help us to get to Jannah! On the day of Ashura, who was the "compass" or guide for the Muslims? (Wait for answers.)
5. **SAY:** Exactly! Imam Husain (A) was the guide. Did the people listen to him? (Wait for answers.)
6. **SAY:** No, unfortunately, instead of following his guidance, they killed him! It's important that we not be like those people! We should know who our guide is today and follow him. Who is our guide today? (Wait for answers.)
7. **SAY:** MashaAllah, we are blessed to have Imam Mahdi (AJ), who is our guide! Even though we cannot see him, he is always present and guiding us to make good choices and become closer to Allah. Today, we are going to make special compass bracelets to remind ourselves that our guide, Imam Mahdi (AJ) is here guiding us, and we can always turn to him when we need help!
8. At this time, pass out a compass bracelet to each child. They can decorate it as they wish and write "Ya Mahdi" or "Imam Mahdi (AJ) is my guide!" on it using sharpies.

Project #4: I Saw Nothing but Beauty

Objective: Students will learn about the Sermon of Sayyidah Zaynab in the court of Yazid and why she said "I saw nothing but beauty" when describing the day of Ashura.

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 45Minutes

Materials:

- DIY Binoculars (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-binoculars-a2-56_4025.fltr?categoryId=550179)
- Markers

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Let me ask you all a question. Imagine you were present on the day of Ashura, and you saw all the horrible things that happened. You saw your family members being killed. You saw the thirsty children who were refused water. You saw the tents set on fire. You saw your beloved brother, the Imam of the time, being killed. Imagine you saw all these things, and then, someone asked you, "How would you describe what you saw in Karbala?" What would your answer be? (Wait for answers.)
2. **SAY:** Those are all good answers. But let me tell you something that might surprise you. Sayyidah Zaynab, the sister of Imam Husain (A), was there in Karbala and she did see all these horrible and difficult things. And when the evil ruler Yazid asked her, "How would you describe what you saw in Karbala?" do you know what she said? She said something beautiful:

   مَا رَأَيْتُ إِلاّ جَمِيلا
   Ma ra'itu illa jameela
   I saw nothing but beauty.

3. **SAY:** What? How was what Sayyidah Zaynab saw beautiful? What do you think she meant by this? (Wait for answers.)
4. **SAY:** Those are all great guesses. You see, what Sayyidah Zaynab meant by this is that she saw the beauty of Allah. Everything that happened in Karbala was in line with the will of Allah. Nothing can happen without Allah's will. So, even though what happened in Karbala was horrible, it was still Allah's will. As Muslims, even during hard times and difficulties, like when we are having a bad day, we should still be content or happy with what is happening. This doesn't mean that I can't be sad. You can be sad, but at the same time, you should be patient and understand that what is happening is a test from Allah. When you do this you will see the beauty of Allah. You will understand that this test is actually a way for you to get closer to Allah and make your faith stronger. Sayyidah Zaynab understood this, you see. She knew that what happened in Karbala was a test for the Ahlul Bayt, and it was from this test that Islam would be saved.
5. **SAY:** Tonight, we are going to make our own "Beauty Binoculars." InshaAllah whenever you are having a bad day or going through a difficult time, you can look through your binoculars and remember what Sayyidah Zaynab said so that you can also find the beauty in your test!
6. Pass out the DIY Binoculars to each student. They can decorate the binoculars with markers and write "I Saw Nothing but Beauty."

Project #5: A Follower of the Imam

Objective: Students will learn that in order to be a follower and elite soldier of Imam Mahdi (AJ), we must embody certain characteristics of a Shi'a.

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

- People Cutouts (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-large-look-it-s-me-kid-bulletin-board-cut-outs-a2-13654128.fltr?)
- Markers/crayons

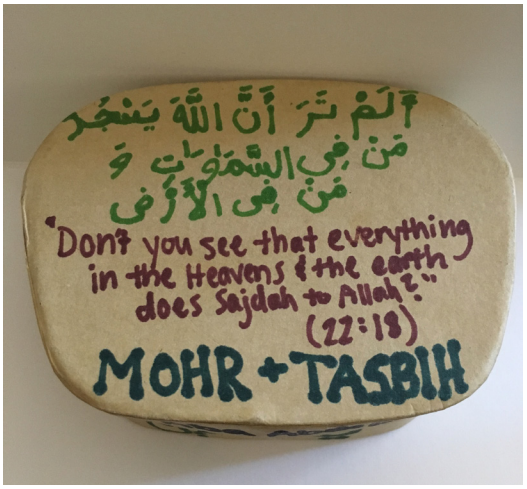
Time: 45 minutes

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Raise your hand if you want to be a follower of your Imam (AJ)! (Wait for students to raise hands.)
2. **SAY:** Now, raise your hand if you want to be a special helper and soldier of our Imam (AJ)! (Wait for students to raise hands.)
3. **SAY:** InshaAllah we all get to be amongst his special helpers and soldiers! But in order to be part of this very special group, what do you think we have to do? (Wait for answers.)
4. **SAY:** Yes, that's right! We have to make good choices and do those things that Allah and the Imam have asked us to do. We have to behave in a way that makes our Imam happy. We learned how during the time of Imam Husain (A), people didn't make good choices or listen to the Imam, so they didn't get to be a part of that army. InshaAllah we can learn from this and not make the same mistake as those people. What are some actions we can do while we are waiting for the Imam to return that will make him happy? (Wait for answers)
5. **SAY:** Excellent answers. Those are all great things we can do while waiting for the Imam. Now, what qualities do you think the Imam is looking for in his followers? How does he want us to be? (Allow students to answer and write their ideas on the board. Some qualities may include kind, modest, respectful, responsible, pious, etc.)
6. **SAY:** Today, we are going to make, well, ourselves. But not just our regular old selves. We are going to make ourselves as a follower of the Imam (AJ). (Hold up a cutout to show students)
7. **SAY:** On one side, you will draw yourself, a follower of the Imam. How should you dress, and what should you wear as a follower of the Imam (AJ)? Think about that before you draw yourself. Then, on the other side, you will draw yourself on the inside. This means, that you will write down the traits that you should have on the inside, as a follower of the Imam. You can look on the board for some ideas we came up with earlier, or you can even add your own!
8. At this time, pass out a cutout to each child and allow them to draw/decorate.

Project #6: Turbah Boxes

Objective: Students will learn about the sacred act of sujood, especially doing sajdah on the turbah of Karbala/Imam Husain (A).



Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 45 Minutes

Materials:

- DIY Boxes (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-box-assortment-a2-48_101.fltr?)
- Sharpies/permanent markers

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Raise your hand if you can tell me the last time you offered Salaah. (Wait for students to raise hands.)
2. **SAY:** MashaAllah! Now, while praying Salaah, in which position do you think you are the closest to Allah? (Wait for answers.)
3. **SAY:** Great guesses! According to ahadith from our Imams (A), the closest position to Allah is in...sajdah or sujood! Can I have a special volunteer show me how to do sajdah (Choose a student to come up and demonstrate how to do sajdah.)
4. **SAY:** Ahsant, thank you for that demonstration! Now, why do you think sajdah is the closest position to Allah? (Wait for answers.)
5. **SAY:** Great guesses! The reason you are closest to Allah in sujood is because this is where you are most humble. Do you bow down in front of just anyone? No, of course not! You only bow down in front of someone who is worthy. And the only One worthy of doing sajdah to is Allah! That is why Allah loves to see us do sajdah, and that is why we are closest to him when we are in sujood. Do you know what Imam Husain (A) did right before he was killed? (Wait for answers.)
6. **SAY:** Yes, that's correct! He was in sujood! He was in sujood thanking Allah and praying to Allah. He even prayed for all of us, his Shi'as! SubhaanAllah! How lucky are we to have such a kind Imam! So, doing sajdah is a very special act. We don't only have to do sajdah in Salaah. We can also do it after our Salaah — this is called Sajdah ash-Shukr, where we do sajdah and thank Allah. Who can tell me what we do sajdah on? (Wait for answers.)
7. **SAY:** Yes! We do sajdah on a turbah, or mohr or sajdegah, as some call it. Does anyone know what a turbah is made out of? (Wait for answers)
8. **SAY:** Exactly! A turbah is made out of dust or dirt, but most turbahs are not just made out of any ordinary dirt. THey are made out of a special dirt called Turbat al-Husain (or some of you may know this as Khak-e-Shifa). This is a special dirt from Karbala, where Imam Husain (A) is buried. Our Imams (A) have told us that this dirt is very special and has special qualities.
9. Imam as-Sadiq (A) has said, "The soil of Imam Husain's (A) grave is a cure for all diseases." (Kaamil uz-Ziayarat, P. 285)
10. Imam as-Sadiq (A) also said, "By doing sajdah on the dust of Imam Husain's (A) grave, the seven layers of earth light up." (Wasaail ash-Shia, Vol. 5, P. 365)
11. **SAY:** So, tonight, we are going to make special turbah and tasbih boxes. You can store your turbahs inside these boxes. On top, we will write an ayah of the Quran that reminds us of how sajdah is so important!
12. Pass out boxes and allow students to decorate. On top of their boxes, they can write the following ayah (Write on the board so students can copy):

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّـهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ

Don't you see that everything in the heavens and the earth does sajdah to Allah? (22:18)

Project #7: Bay'ah to our Imam (A)

Objective: Students will learn about the concept of bay'ah and make their own pledge to Imam Husain (A) and the Imam of our time, Imam Mahdi (AJ).

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

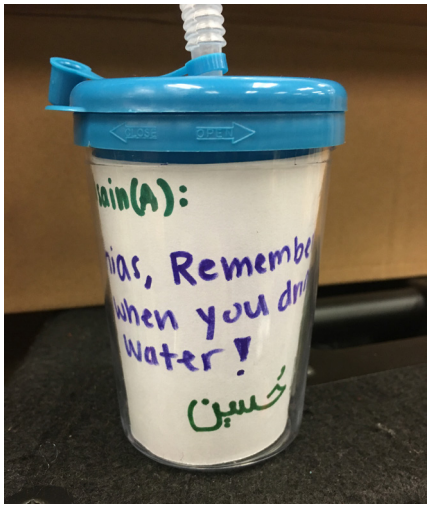
- DIY Wood Circles (http://www.oriental-trading.com/diy-unfinished-wood-circle-stand-ups-a2-13778219.fltr?)
- Permanent markers

Time: 40 minutes

Procedure:

1. SAY: Does anyone know what the word bay'ah means? (Wait for answers.)
2. SAY: Great guesses! Bay'ah means to pledge allegiance to someone, or promise them that you will always support them. Who do you think we should give bay'ah to? (Wait for answers.)
3. SAY: Exactly! We should give bay'ah to the Prophet (S) and the Imams (A)! Do you think we should give bay'ah to bad people? (Wait for answers.)
4. SAY: You're right, wes shouldn't. One of the reasons that Yazid wanted to kill Imam Husain (A) was because Imam Husain (A) refused to give bay'ah to Yazid. Why do you think Imam Husain (A) did this? (Wait for answers.)
5. SAY: Exactly! Yazid was openly sinning and making fun of the truth and religion of Islam. The Imam (A) could not follow an evil man like Yazid. By giving our bay'ah to Imam Husain (A) we are saying that O Imam Husain (A), we will always support you and carry your flag. We will be proud to be your followers, and we will stand up for the truth and against evil. We couldn't be in Karbala to support you, but we will try our best to live according to your message and make good choices, like you taught us! Today, one of the best ways we can do bay'ah to Imam Husain (A) is by waiting for the arrival of our 12th Imam (AJ). Remember, our waiting should be with learning more about Islam and doing good deeds.
6. Today, we will be creating plaques that show our bay'ah to Imam Husain (A). We pledge allegiance to Imam Husain (A), and although we could not be there to support him, we can support the Imam of our time, Imam Mahdi (AJ) by giving him our bayah, too. So, on these plaques, we will be writing "Ya Husain (A)" on one side and "Ya Mahdi (AJ)" on the other, to pledge our allegiance to both Imams!
7. Hand each student a wooden circle. Allow students to use permanent markers to write "Ya Husain (A)" on one side and "Ya Mahdi (AJ)" on the other.

Project #8: Water Bottles



Objective: Students will learn about Hadhrat Abbas and his obedience and sacrifice for his Imam especially when he was getting water for the loved ones of Imam Husain (A)

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- DIY Water bottles (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-cups-with-lids-and-straws-a2-57_9106.fltr?)
- Markers/crayons/color pencils

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Before the day of Ashura, Imam Husain (A) and his family and friends went through many difficulties. For 3 whole days, they were not allowed to drink any water. Can you imagine how thirsty they must have been?! His entire army was thirsty — and this is how many of his soldiers died.

   Imam Husain (A) had a special brother named Hadhrat Abbas. Hadhrat Abbas was so brave! He was the flagbearer of our Imam's (A) army — this meant that he held the army's flag. When he heard the children crying and saying, "Al-atash, al-atash - I'm thirsty, I'm thirsty," he couldn't take it! He asked his brother for permission and went to get water for them from the river.

   He tried his very best to get water for the children. He even made it to the river and filled up his water sack, but Yazid's evil army didn't allow him to make it back! He gave up his hands and his life, trying to help his Imam (A) and his followers.
2. **SAY:** On the day of Ashura, before his death, Imam Husain (A) said "Tell my Shi'a that whenever they drink water, they should remember me and my thirst." Let's try to always remember your Imam (A) when we drink water. Did you know that there is a special du'a that we should recite before drinking water? This is the du'a:
3. Salawaatullahi 'alaal Husain wa ahle baytihi wa ashaabihi wa la'anatullahi 'alaa qaatilihi wa 'aadaaihi

   May the blessings of Allah be upon Husain (A), his family, and his friends, and may Allah remove His mercy from the killers and enemies of Imam Husain (A)
4. **SAY:** Tonight, we are going to make your own water cups with the du'a of Imam Husain (A). This way, we can always recite the du'a when drinking water. We can also use these cups instead of water bottles to help protect the environment, inshaAllah!
5. Hand each student a DIY water bottle. Have them use crayons/colored pencils/markers to decorate the insert that goes inside their water bottle by writing the following du'a:
6. Salawaatullahi 'alaal Husain wa ahle baytihi wa ashaabihi wa la'anatullahi 'alaa qaatilihi wa 'aadaaihi
7. May the blessings of Allah be upon Husain (A), his family, and his friends, and may Allah remove His mercy from the killers and enemies of Imam Husain (A)
8. Younger students can write qualities of Hadhrat Abbas (e.g., bravery, sacrifice, courage, servitude, selflessness, Taqwa, etc.) or even just Ya Husain (A)!

Project #9: Quran: Message in a Bottle

Objective: Students will understand that Imam Husain (A) and all the Imams (A) were talking Qurans and had a strong connection with the Quran. Thus, we should also have a strong connection with the Quran and incorporate its messages into our daily lives.

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- Prayer Message bottles (http://www.orientaltrading.com/prayer-message-in-a-bottle-ornaments-a2-13750643.fltr?)
- Pencils

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Who can tell me the name of the book that Muslims use as a guide for how to live our lives? (Wait for answers.)
2. **SAY:** Good! We turn to the Quran to guide us and tell us how to live our lives. The Quran has so many different messages for us about how to make good choices and live a good life. But do you know who the link between us and the Quran is? (Wait for answers.)
3. **SAY:** Yes, exactly! The Imams (A) help us understand the Quran. Did you know that the Imams (A) are like the talking Quran? This is because they lived their lives according to the Quran. You will learn in the speech how Imam Husain (A) made the Quran such an important part of his life, and how it was involved in every step he took towards Karbala. He recited an ayah for every event!
4. **SAY:** We, too, should try to make the Quran a part of our daily lives. How can we do this? We can recite even one ayah a day, slowly adding more as we get used to it. It's also important to understand what we are reading and what messages the Quran contains.
5. **SAY:** Does anyone know any ayahs of the Quran that have important messages and reminders? We can recite these ayahs to help ourselves become closer to Allah. (Wait for answers.)
6. If students have difficulty coming up with ayahs, here are some you can write on the board:
   - Surely, in the remembrance of Allah the hearts find peace. (13:28)
   - My Lord, increase my knowledge. (20:114)
   - Our Lord! Grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the punishment of the fire. (2:201)
   - Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are all for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds." (6:162)
   - Our Lord! pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm and assist us against the unbelieving people. (2:250)
   - O my Lord! Make me someone who establishes regular Prayer. (14:40)
7. I want everyone to choose one ayah that you want to try to live your life by.
8. Provide each child with a message bottle. Have children write their ayah on the provided paper (for younger children, have adults help them). Help them understand that they should frequently repeat their ayah as a du'a and try to live by it. Then, when they've memorized it, they can choose another one to write.

Project #10: PRAY Suncatcher

Objective: Students will develop their love for Salaah and prayer by creating their own reminder to pray suncatcher.

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

- "Pray" suncatcher kits (http://www.orientaltrading.com/pray-tissue-paper-sign-craft-kit-a2-48_8242.fltr?key-word=pray)
- Glue sticks

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** On the day before Ashura, the enemies wanted to attack the army of Imam Husain (A), but Imam Husain (A) asked them for one more night. Does anyone know why he might have done this? (Wait for answers.)
2. **SAY:** Those are all great guesses. Imam Husain (A) asked for one more night because he wanted one more night to pray and make Du'a to Allah. He said, "Inni uhibuus-Salaah — surely, I love Salaah." You see, Imam Husain (A) loved Salaah and praying so much that he wanted just one more night to pray. You guys might know what this feels like. Sometimes, you're playing video games and you're having so much fun, and your mom says, "Ali, time for bed!" and you say, "Mom, can I please have 5 more minutes?!" This is how Imam Husain (A) felt about Salaah! He loved it so much, that just like you want 5 more minutes, he wanted one more night.

   Imam Husain (A) gave so much importance to Salaah! He always prayed on time and with concentration. In fact, on the day of Ashura, he and his army even stopped in the middle of battle so they could pray their Dhuhr prayers on time. Yazid's army was attacking them in the middle of Salaah, so some people guarded the Imam (A) as they prayed. SubhaanAllah! That's how much Imam Husain (A) loved Salaah.
3. **SAY:** So, knowing how much importance Imam Husain (A) gave to Salaah, how should we treat Salaah? (Wait for answers.)
4. **SAY:** Good! We should try our best to pray on time, pray in jama'ah when we can, pray with our hearts and minds, try to stay focused, and maybe even do some extra acts, like tasbeeh. Today, we are going to create your very own PRAY suncatchers, which will remind us to pray Salaah. We know that if Imam Husain (A) made Salaah a priority, we should, too. InshaAllah you can hang these in your rooms to remind you when it's time to pray!
5. At this time, pass out a suncatcher kit to each child. They can use the glue sticks to stick the tissue papers to the plastic side. Then, stick that to the black PRAY part, sticking the string as a hanger in between.

SPEECHES

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اللهم صلى على محمد و آل محمد و عجل فرجهم

السلام عليك يا ابا عبد الله الحسين عليه السلام

General Guidelines

Speech Structure:

- Start with Du'a of Imam Mahdi (AJ) (Dua al-Faraj)
- Main speech
- Museebah
    - It's nice to turn off the lights and turn on a few lamps
    - Recite the Salaam to Imam Husain (A):

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

    - Children usually repeat the last 4 lines
    - We usually recite the last 4 lines 3 times and dedicate them:
        - in hopes of manifesting the qualities we learnt about
        - for our parents
        - for the Imam (AJ) of the time
    - Recite the museebah
    - End with a few du'as
        - "O' Allah, please protect our ulema (scholars) and parents" (Say Ilaahi Ameen and encourage kids to repeat, so it slowly becomes a habit)
        - "O' Allah, please give us the strength to always make good choices" (Ilaahi Ameen)
        - "O' Allah, please help us to become the close friends and helpers of Imam Mahdi (AJ)" (Ilaahi Ameen)
        - "O' Allah, please protect all the children around the world and give them food and shelter" (Ilaahi Ameen)
        - "O' Allah please hasten the reappearance of the Imam so we can finally live as good Muslims in a safe world" (Ilaahi Ameen)

Speech #1: The Importance of Muharram

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلهِ-ربِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn about the sanctity of Muharram and Karbala, and that attending Majaalis and following the message of Imam Husain (A) are a means of moving closer to Allah (SWT).
- Children will learn that the Ziyaraat, Majaalis, recitation, and the Turbah (earth from the grave) of Imam Husain (A) are all sacred blessings that we must revere and hold in high regard.

Lecture Content:

Tonight is the first night of Muharram. From tonight, we will insha'Allah remember the events that occurred in Karbala and the great sacrifice and lessons that Imam Husain (A) taught us.

The events that happened in Karbala on the day of Ashura only took a few hours. They happened in a land that was a desert, more than 1300 years ago! Yet, it is an event that more and more people come to learn about every year, and with each year, more and more people gather in Islamic centers and schools around the world to remember, learn about, and cry for Imam Husain (A).

On his journey, Imam Husain (A) only had a small army of about 72 close friends, but he had a large goal. He was working for Allah (SWT), and so we see that this event remained etched in history. Many events happen in history, but we see that they are forgotten — but Imam Husain (A) did this for Allah (SWT), so Allah (SWT) gave it the miracle of remaining unforgotten. As he tells us in the Quran:

مَا عِندَكُمْ يَنفَدُ ۖ وَمَا عِندَ اللَّـهِ بَاقٍ ۗ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Whatever you have will end, but what Allah has is lasting. And We will surely give those who were patient their reward according to the best of what they used to do. (16:96)

You see, Imam Husain (A) was filled with the love of Allah and was obedient to Allah (SWT), so his actions and the message of Karbala were connected with Allah and will remain forever.

Soon after the event of Ashura, the land of Karbala became a land for Ziyarat (visiting) and a place for which many people from around the world save their money in order to visit. Many of them go through many difficulties just to be able to go visit this holy place where Imam Husain (A) is buried. They go there to pray, mourn, and remember the lessons of Karbala.

So, do we only remember the event of Karbala because it is a sad event that happened? Of course not! We remember Karbala because Imam Husain (A) did something incredible for Allah (SWT), to save Islam, and so that you and I can know what true Islam is. We need to understand this true Islam and act upon it ourselves, and we need the help of Imam Husain (A) and the Ahlul Bayt (A) to guide us to be the best we can.
We also learn from Karbala that the golden key is that our intentions and actions should be based on what Allah (SWT) wants from us and will make Him happy. This is the key to all of our success in this world and in the next world.

Now, let's learn more about how blessed we are to come to the Majlis of Imam Husain (A) and be able to listen to these speeches. Learning and reminding ourselves of Imam Husain (A) will give us the opportunity to recharge our spiritual batteries and to get closer to Allah (SWT), inshaAllah!

It has been said that if the Imams were to describe the special status of Imam Husain (A), they would have said something like the following: "All of the Imams (A) are boats of rescue, but the boat of Imam Husain (A) has two special characteristics. One, it is the biggest and most wide, and secondly, it is the fastest."

If any of the other Imams (A) were living during the time of Imam Husain (A), they would have done the same thing that Imam Husain (A) did. Yet, because this action/sacrifice of Imam Husain (A) was so important and it saved Islam at that time, all of the Imams (A) want us to remember this, and they have shown us the importance of the events of Karbala in different ways.

Today, we are going to speak specifically about important things we should understand about Imam Husain (A) and how blessed we are to have this opportunity to participate in these Muharram Majaalis. We are going to talk about four different topics we ought to understand when it comes to Imam Husain (A) and Muharram.

1. The first is the importance of Ziyarah of Imam Husain (A) or visiting his shrine in Karbala If we study the ahadith of our Imams (A) regarding going to Karbala, it's amazing how much importance it has been given. So many blessings have been promised for going for Ziyarah of Imam Husain (A)! We can divide these blessings into three parts: the spiritual effects the Ziyarahs on us, the worldly effects it has on us, and the treasures and effects we will be given in the next world.
2.

First of all, before we begin discussing any of these blessings, we should understand that we can do Ziyarah of Imam Husain (A) physically by going to Karbala or from afar; for example, we can simply stand, face the direction of Karbala, and remember Imam Husain (A). We can also place our hand on our hearts and then send our sincere salam to Imam Husain (A). This is also a type of Ziyarah. The most important thing when we admire someone, and love someone to the point where we would love to visit them, is to follow in their footsteps - to become like them and make choices that they would be happy with.

Imam ar-Ridha (A) has told us, "Whoever visits Imam Husain (A), while knowing and understanding the position and greatness of Imam Husain (A), will receive the spiritual status of being near the throne of Allah (SWT) and have the pleasure of being able to spiritually communicate with Allah (SWT)." (Bihaar ul-Anwaar, Vol. 97, P. 73)

Wow, that is a great, great honor! But wait, there's more! Imam Sadiq (A) has said, "Four thousand Angels will come and welcome the visitor to Imam Husain (A). Then, as the visitor leaves, they will come and say goodbye to him. If the visitor of Imam Husain (A) ever gets sick later in his or her life, the Angels will come and visit him or her. Then when the visitor dies, the Angel will be there when he or she is being put in the grave, asking Allah to forgive this person." Imam Sadiq (A) has also that, "Sayyidah Fatima Zahra (A) will come herself to the grave of someone who has visited Imam Husain (A) and ask for his or her forgiveness."

How beautiful are all these spiritual blessings that we can get from Ziyarat of Imam Husain (A)! SubhaanAllah!
Then, we have the worldly blessings! There are so many ahadith from our Imams that say, "Allah will answer the wishes and prayers of whoever visits Imam Husain (A)." Of course, He will answer those prayers that are good and good for us.

Finally, what about the blessings in the next world? Imam Sadiq (A) has told us about some of the blessings we will get in the next world. He has said, "When all of the people will gather on the Day of Judgment, waiting to enter Jannah, and waiting to see what will happen, those who have visited Imam Husain (A) will enter Heaven 40 years before everyone else!" Wow, 40 whole years!

So, this is a visit that is very special. We are not talking about someone who just goes and says, "Salamun alaikum, O Imam" and then leaves. No, that's not it. This is someone who visits and tries to make their life a life that would make Imam Husain (A) and Allah (SWT) happy.

3. The second important thing we should understand is how blessed we are to be able to attend these kinds of Majaalis where we are able to come and remember Imam Husain (A). Imam ar-Ridha (A) has said, "O people, if you want to cry for anything, then cry for what happened to Imam Husain (A). And when you cry for him, your tears will wipe away even your greatest sins. They will help protect you from performing sins."

These kinds of ahadith show us that it is very important for us to get together and remember Imam Husain (A), learn from him, and cry for him. This remembrance is like a strength and power that is building and growing inside of us. It's a feeling that, InshaAllah, will help us grow closer to Allah (SWT). This way, it can help us make better choices in the future that will make Allah (SWT) happy with us. Therefore, we are very blessed to be in these Majaalis. Send a beautiful salawaat for this great blessing!

4. The third important thing for us to understand is that it is very important for us to give special respect to those who speak about the events of Karbala, and even the people who come and recite poetry, nohas, and latmiyya for us. We know that our Imams (A) would highly respect the poets who would recite poetry for Imam Husain (A). One day, a poet read a poem about Ashura and Karbala in front of Imam-Sadiq (A). When the poet was done, the Imam (A) raised his hands in du'a and said, "O Allah, forgive this man's sins, and forgive even those that he will commit in the future, and what he has done in the past." Then, he said, "O Kumayt (Kumayt was the poet's name), I swear by Allah that when you were reciting this poem, the Angels were here, and they were crying with me and the other people that were here."

There was another poet named Diabil. Diabil read a poem to Imam ar-Ridha (A) about Karbala, and Imam ar-Ridha (A) cried so much that he gave Diabil a special shirt and said, "Diabil, I offer my Salaah and special prayers in this shirt; I have even performed my Salaatul Layl in this shirt. So, please keep this shirt, and inshaAllah it will give you blessings."

5. The last blessing that we should know about is the special clay of the grave of Imam Husain (A). You see, in the Masjid, Islamic centers, or even in your homes, you will see that many of the turbas/mohrs we do sajdah on during Salaah are made out of the clay of Karbala. It is very important that we respect all turbas/mohrs, especially those mohrs that are from Karbala.

Imam as-Sadiq (A) has told us that, "Whoever does sajdah on the turbah/mohr that is made from the clay of the grave of Imam Husain (A), Allah (SWT) will give them great blessings and even take away some of the barriers between them and Allah (SWT)." Therefore, doing sajdah to Allah by placing our forehead on the turbah has great blessings for us.

Even before Ashura took place, Imam Ali (A) was passing by Karbala on his travels before Imam Husain (A) was martyred. Still, Imam Ali (A) stopped, picked up some of the sand, and smelled it and said, "O the sand of Karbala, you are so lucky — you have a blessing that Allah (SWT) has placed on you. From here, people will come and they will become better people and reach Allah (SWT)."

So, even the earth and clay from Karbala is special! Boys and girls, we are sitting here today in this Majlis, remembering Imam Husain (A). Imagine how blessed we are, and imagine how many blessings we are getting just for sitting here today! In the Quran, Allah says:

وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّـهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

And whoever honors the symbols of Allah — indeed, it is from the piety of hearts. (22:32)

Please remember all of our actions are setting the stage. We have to do our part — we have to change, we have to learn about Imam Husain and the events of Karbala, and we have to make good choices so that Imam Husain (A) can help us become closer to Allah (SWT), inshaAllah.

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

It's the first night of Muharram. Even though we're not in Karbala, our hearts are in Karbala insha'Allah. Imam as-Sadiq (A) says that if you can't go to Karbala to visit Imam Husain (A), face the Qibla and say 3 times, "Assalamu Alayka Ya Aba Abdillah – peace and blessing be upon you O Aba Abdillah."

Another hadith says go to a very high place and say with all your heart "Assalamu alayka ya Aba Abdillah."
One scholar, whenever he would finish reading tasbih after Salaah, he would always say "Assalamu alayka ya Aba Abdillah."

Someone asked him, "Why do you do this? Is this part of the prayer?"

He replied, "No, it is not part of the prayer, but Imam Husain (A) has given us so much. How can I not remember him? Even this Salaah that I have is from Imam Husain (A)."

It has been 50 years since his grandfather, Rasulullah (S), has left this world, and Imam Husain (A) has watched as his mother, father, and brother were treated so badly and even killed. Now, he is the last of the five that remains from the Ahlul Kisa.

Tonight, we want to remember a very special martyr, who we can say was the first to sacrifice his life for Imam Husain (A) because he was martyred before the shuhadah of Karbala. Certainly, we know that had he been in Karbala, he would have been among the martyrs of Karbala. I want to talk about the messenger of Imam Husain (A), Muslim ibn Aqeel. Muslim is somebody who is very special to Imam Husain (A). When Imam Husain (A) sent him to Kufa, he sent along with him a letter appointing him as his representative. He said in the letter, "I am sending to you one who is my brother and cousin, and he is the trusted one from my family." To be the trustee of Imam Husain (A) and his representative means that Muslim was someone who had the characteristics and values of Imam Husain (A). When Muslim enters Kufa, thousands of people, some report 18,000, pledge their allegiance to him and promise to support him, but the tale is one of sadness. The tale is one of being tested. Brothers and sisters, when we are tested in our own lives, where do we fall? What if we were there? Those 18,000 were put under a lot of pressure. They were told, "If you follow Muslim, your reputation will be destroyed, we will take your property, we will put you in prison, and we may even kill you." Those who didn't have imaan, or faith, failed the test.

That same Muslim who entered with so many supporters lost all his support when Ibn Ziyad entered the city. We are told that the night before his martyrdom, when Muslim leads Maghrib prayer, there are only about 100 people behind him, and when he leads Isha prayer, that number drops to 10 people. Finally, Muslim is seen walking the streets of Kufa alone. Just imagine this scene, brothers and sisters: the cousin of the Imam of the time walking the streets of the city with no one there to be with him. What a sad scene.

Eventually, he finds the house of a lady named Taw'ah and asks for some water. She brings him water and sees he doesn't leave. She asks, "O stranger why don't you leave? You cannot be here on your own."

He explains, "I am a wanted man. Can you please give me a place to stay just tonight?" This woman is someone who has love of the Ahlul Bayt in her heart. When she realizes that this is Muslim ibn Aqeel, the representative of Imam Husain (A), she lets him stay. She offers him food, but he refuses. He takes the path of the shuhada of karbala — just like they spent their last night on this earth worshipping Allah, so does he.

In the morning, she says to him, "My master, you have not slept all night."

He says "I was busy worshipping, but when I did sleep, I saw my uncle Amir ul-Mu'mineen calling out to me, 'O Muslim, hurry and quickly come to us.' I know this is the last day of my life."

Soon, he hears the sounds of the approaching soldiers, coming to get him. He puts on his battle gear, and prepares for war. He fights so bravely, but it is one man against an entire army. They come up to him individually, in pairs, and in groups. He fights so bravely, but eventually has to surrender.

He is taken to mansion of the governor, Ibn Ziyad, who is waiting for him. Muslim knows this is the end, but refuses to bow or show weakness in front of him. He keeps repeating dhikr of Allah and says, "O Allah, judge between us and these people who have deceived us! These are people who have lied to us and tricked us!"

These are the last moments of Muslim's life. Finally, they take him to the edge of the wall. What are they going to do you, O Muslim? One of the prison guards sees that he's crying. He says, "O Muslim, we thought you were brave! I never thought you would be crying in these moments."

Muslim responds to the guard, "Do not think I am crying for myself! I am crying because I am thinking about my master Husain (A) and his family. I have seen what you have done to me, so I am crying because of how he was forced to leave his home, and because I don't know what you are going to do to him!

The last words of Muslim are his final salaam to his master. He cries out, "Assalamualayka Ya Aba Abdillah!" This is a true soldier and follower of the Imam of his time, Muslim ibn Aqeel. And what do they do to him? What kind of a show do they make of him? They drag his body through Kufa to make him an example to others.

When the news of Muslim's death reaches Imam Husain (A), the Imam is overcome by grief and makes du'a. He says, "May Allah have mercy on Muslim." But he knows that there is someone who will receive this news in a very difficult way. He make his way towards the women's tents and finds his niece, the daughter of Muslim. He begins to stroke her hair in a comforting way.

She says to him, "O my master, you are stroking my hair the way I see others stroke the heads of orphans — those who don't have parents. Are you telling me that something has happened to my father?"

Imam Husain (A) tells her, "O my dear one, know that I am now your father, my sister Zaynab is now your mother, and my sons are now your brothers. We are here for you now."

What a lucky girl she is to have the Imam of her time with her. But what about the children after Ashura? Who is there to stroke their heads lovingly? Who is there to care for them?
La'anatullahi 'aala al-qawm idh-dhaalimeen

Speech #2: The Importance of Good Choices

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِله-ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِى الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn about the importance of making good choices in order to become a true companion of the Imam (AJ).
- Children will learn what causes us to make bad choices, and how to avoid this.

Lecture Content:

Tonight is the second night of Muharram, and Alhamdulillah, we have the tawfiq and are blessed to sit and learn from Imam Husain (A) and the events that happened in Karbala.

So, one of the questions that come to mind during these days is "Why did the horrible events of Karbala happen?" I mean, many of the people who fought against Imam Husain (A) had lived during the time of the Prophet (S) and saw the love and respect that the Prophet (S) had for his beloved grandson, Imam Husain (A). The people of that time were also told by the Prophet (S) that they should follow Imam Ali (A), and that they should stay with his family and follow the right path.

So, we have to ask ourselves what would cause people to turn against the family of the Prophet (S) like this? What kind of bad qualities did they have that caused them stand up against Imam Husain (A)? Why is it important for us to know this? You see, boys and girls, today, we are awaiting the arrival of our Imam Mahdi (AJ), and inshaAllah he comes during our lifetime and we get to be his special helpers and friends. But to make sure that we are among his special helpers, we have to make sure that we are trying our hardest to make the best choices that will make us stronger in faith ad imaad and better friends and, most importantly, believers in the Imam (A). This means we need to stay away from bad choices that surround us everyday.

For example, let's say your parents want to take you to your friend's house, but on the way out, they hear on the radio that there is big accident on a specific freeway. If there are two different freeways your parents can take, which one would they take? (Wait for answers.)

Yes, exactly. They would take the road that they know will get you there safely and with minimal disruption.

Another example can be the decisions you make when you want to eat something. If someone told you that the cake you want to eat is spoiled, would you still eat it?

No, of course not, because you might get sick. Therefore, you can make the decision not to eat the cake, so you don't get sick, even though it might be your favorite cake.

Just like the food we eat and visiting friends can become bad choices if we don't think it through, our soul is put into the same position. We also need to make good choices and keep our soul free from the effects of bad choices, because our soul can become sick as well. We have to be very careful, because we know that even though many Prophets came before us, many people did not listen to them. For example, Prophet Musa (S) warned the people not to follow the evil Pharaoh, but many of them still did not listen. Why not? Why didn't they make good choices? Another example comes from Prophet Saleh (S). Remember, the people asked him to show them a miracle. They told him to have a pregnant she camel come out of the mountain. Suddenly, the mountain split and a camel came from it, just like they asked. This was a miracle, from Allah (SWT), but some people still chose not to believe in Allah and decided not to make good choices.

Tonight, we want to understand how to stay away from these bad qualities. We want to understand how to create a big red STOP sign, so that we stay away from that which will lead us to bad choices. We will discuss two important reasons to stay away from bad choices. Although there are many reasons, these two specific reasons were written by Imam Husain (A) in a letter to his cousin and representative, Muslim ibn Aqeel.

You see, the people of Kufa had said that they would be there for Imam Husain (A) and support him. They sent the Imam (A) thousands of letters saying that they wanted to help the Imam defeat Yazid. But in reality, their actions were contrary to their words. Most of them eventually abandoned Imam Husain (A). Some of these same people even joined the army against Imam Husain (A).

Imam Husain (A) sent a letter to these people via Muslim ibn Aqeel. In this letter, Imam Husain (A) wrote:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

من الحسين بن على الى الملأ من المؤمنين و المسلمين

In the name of Allah, the Most Kind, the Most Merciful. From Husain ibn Ali (A) to the people who are mu'mineen (believers) and muslimeen (those who follow Islam)

1. An Imam is someone who follows the book of Allah (SWT) فلعمرى، ما الامام الا الحاكم بالكتاب
2. An Imam makes sure that the people are following the rules of Allah (SWT)

القائم بالقسط، الداين بدين الحق الحابس نفسه على ذات الله والسلام.

So, one of the first reasons that causes people to begin making bad choices is that they stop living in accordance to what the Quran has placed before them and the teachings of the Imam. Just as Allah (SWT) had chosen the Prophets, Allah (SWT) had also chosen our Imams (A). But many people did not follow the Imams or the Quran.

Sometimes, we know we should follow the Quran and the Imams but we end up loving the things around us or being so attached to them that it is hard for us to follow and obey the Imam (A). And we know that for us to make good choices to get to Jannah and closer to Allah, we must obey the Imams, even if it is hard for us. Let me tell you a story.

One day, Mansoor, the evil Abbasid caliph, planned to trick the Imam. He appointed a man named Ibn Muhajir to give out money to all the Sayyids (family of the Ahlul Bayt). He said to Ibn Mujahir, "Don't tell them that I am giving this money, or else they won't take it! Just say you are Shias of Khurasan, and this is pure money is for you, and then take a receipt from them that they received it."

When Ibn Mujahir finished distributing the money and came back to Mansoor, Mansoor looked through the receipts and exclaimed, "Where is Imam Sadiq's (A) receipt?!"

Ibn Muhajir sad, "I am sorry, but we were unable to get his receipt."
Mansoor shouted, "Why not?! That's the main reason I sent you to do this job!!!"
He replied, "We went to the masjid, and we were sitting there, and the Imam was praying. Right after he was done, we approached him, and he said to us, 'O, Muhajir, be afraid of Allah.'
I said to him, 'My name's not Muhajir. I am one of your Shi'as!'

The Imam said, 'You are lying. You came from Mansoor, the caliph. The money you have is from him as well, and you cannot lie in front of me — I am the Imam. I have been appointed by Allah (SWT).'"
Muhajir said to the Caliph Mansoor, "I was so embarrassed that I got up and left immediately."
When Mansoor heard this, he began pacing. He was so upset, and he started mumbling, "Indeed, Ja'far, the son of Muhammad (Imam as-Sadiq (AS)), is someone who is spoken to by the Angels, and he knows of the unseen."

So, you see, even the most evil person, the Caliph Mansoor, knew that Imam Sadiq (A) was really an Imam and the leader chosen by Allah (SWT), but because he loved so many other things, like being in charge, being powerful, and

being the king, all he wanted to do was follow what was in his heart, instead of what Allah (SWT) wanted him to do. Therefore, because he adored the life of the dunya, he did not listen to the Imam (A).

So, the first thing we have to do is be able to give priority to obeying Allah and His Imams. When it is Salaah time and I am playing my favorite game, I need to make a good choice. When I really want to eat something, but it is not halaal, I have to make a good choice. When everyone else is not following the rules of Islam, and I have to, especially in school or after school or when I'm with friends, I have to make good choices.

Even during the time of Prophet Musa (S), people showed the same attitude of giving importance to their own wishes instead of obeying Allah. There is an ayah from the Quran that tells us how people behaved. Allah says in Surah Naml, Verse 14:

وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا

And they rejected them, even though their [inner] selves were convinced, out of injustice and arrogance. (27:14)

You see, the people of his time knew he was a Prophet (S), but they refused to admit the truth and believe in him. Additionally, in Surah Baqarah, Verse 46, Allay says that the unbelievers recognized who the Prophet (S) was, just like they recognized who their own children were. Meaning, it was made very clear to them; they all knew that the Prophet Muhammad (S) was a Prophet from Allah (SWT). So, why didn't they believe? It's because they didn't believe with their whole hearts; they believed only what their own desires wanted. Their desires and wishes controlled them.

Therefore, when we come back and think about the people of Kufa, you can understand that they didn't believe in their Imam with their full hearts. They knew who he was, they knew what he stood for, but their belief was not strong, and they were on the wrong path.

Today, as we wait for Imam Mahdi (AJ), we have to ask ourselves, "How can we make sure that we don't go against what the Imam (A) wants?" First, we have to find out what Allah (SWT) has made wajib and haram for us. Even if we are not baligh, it's good to ask and find out. Second, we need to practice, practice, practice! We have to be kind to our parents, even if we feel like we have a right to be upset. We have to be kind to our siblings, even though we might find them annoying at times. We have to make decisions even when they are difficult, such as moving away from people who may be listening to haraam music or committing other sins knowingly and without wanting to repent. And sometimes, for our sisters who observe the Islamic dress code in front of non Mahrams, it can be hot or hard to be wearing hijab, but they do it because they know that the reward comes from Allah (SWT).

Finally, if we are able to learn and stick to those very special reminders that Imam Husain (A) gave us, we can become much, much stronger and be ready for the arrival of our beloved Imam Mahdi (AJ), inshaAllah!
Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Tonight is the second night of Muharram. According to history, the caravan of Imam Husain (A) landed in Karbala on the second day of Muharram. If you go back and look at the different places this caravan has been to, you will see that it has gone through a lot. It has passed from city to city, and we can only imagine the state of those who are in this caravan — how much pain and suffering, and how much patience they've shown along the way. How many people have joined them, and then left them. How they left, hoping to join their followers in Kufa, but have now realized that these same people have turned on them.

They are making their way, and have now finally landed in Karbala. What is Karbala? Karbala is a patch of desert land, where the sun shines very brightly, and it is very hot in the daytime. But it is also a special land. We are told that whenever the different Prophets would travel through this land, they would make it a point to stop there. When our first Imam, Imam Ali (A), was journeying through this land, he made it a point to stop there. They knew that this place, above all places on this earth, was going to be the most special of places, where the holiest of blood would be spilt. When Imam Husain (A) and his caravan draw near the land of Karbala, he asks those around him, "What place is this?" You see, he wanted to make a point. They tell him, "This is known as Karbala, O the son of Rasulullah." Imam Husain (A) then cries out, "I swear by Allah, that this is the land of karb and bala — difficulty and hardship. This is the place where we fill face difficulty. This is the place where our blood will be spilt. And this is the place where our haram will be built. O Allah, I ask for protection from karb and bala — from difficulty and hardship."

What kind of bala is Imam Husain (A) envisioning here? What does he expect is going to happen in the upcoming days? We can only imagine the different thoughts and events running through the Imam's (A) mind. The Imam (A) commands his camp to be set in the land of Karbala. He takes out his sword and begins to sharpen it, and as he does so, he cries out the following poetry:

Woe unto you, O world,
What a bad friend your are!
And how many mornings and nights did you have?
How many of your seekers have left this world,
But it is this world that is never content in taking someone else.
Every living one is treading a path.
How near is the promised time for journeying!
And the affairs are in the hands of the Majestic One.
When Imam Husain (A) recites this line of poetry, there is someone listening to each and every word very carefully. Narrators report that as soon as the Imam (A) finishes reciting this poetry, Sayyidah Zaynab (A) comes out of her tent and says, "O my brother, these words that you just said right now are words said by someone who is certain he is going to meet death. Is this the case?"
Imam Husain (A) replies, "Yes, my dear sister."
Zaynab (SA) cannot contain herself. She begins to weep. She knows that they have finally reached that place — they have arrived in the promised land. The other women in the tent come to know about this, and the air is filled with sadness. Umm Kulthum cries out, "Wa Muhammada! Wa Aliya! Wa Ummata!"
La'anatullahi 'alaa qawm udh-dhaalimee

Speech #3: Following True Islam

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِله-ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn about the importance of upholding the true teachings of Islam.
- Children will learn that we should follow Islam and its rules the way they were taught to us by the Imam (A), not the way we want.

Lecture Content:

Tonight is the third night of Muharram. So, last night, we spoke about what happened to some people during to the time of Imam Husain (A), who knew that he was the grandson of the Prophet (S). They also knew that the Prophet (S) used to say, "Hasan and Husain are the leaders of the youth of Paradise."

The people also knew that the Prophet of Islam had announced that Imam Ali (A) would be the Imam after him, then Imam Hasan (A), followed by Imam Husain (A). So, what were the reasons that people went against Imam Husain (A)? Remember, even the people of Kufa who had sent the Imam thousands of letters turned on him. Why?

Last night, we said that it was because they didn't properly believe in and obey the Quran and the Imam, and so, they didn't follow the rightly guided to keep them on a safe path to Allah (SWT). Even though many of them understood and knew the importance of Imamate and the Imam, they didn't have the love and obedience in their hearts to truly stay with our beloved Imam Husain (A).

Knowing this, we begin to understand why Imam Husain (A) kept repeating on the day of Ashura, "I am the son of Fatimah az-Zahra; I am the grandson of the Prophet of Allah (S); and I am the son of Imam Ali al-Murtadha (A)."

He kept repeating these words because he wanted people to wake up and recognize what they were doing and whom they were turning against. He wanted them to understand who was following and spreading the true message of Islam. The people who were going against Imam Husain (A) were sleeping, so to speak, and he had to wake them up! He had to wake up their sleeping souls.

You see, sometimes when our souls are sleeping, we aren't seeing the whole picture. Let me tell you a story which illustrates this point.

There was a chicken who was so focused on eating a worm that all he did was pay attention to his tummy. Because he was so focused on the worm, he didn't notice that there was a cat nearby, who was staring at him with big eyes! The chicken was so focused on the worm, that he had no idea that the cat was getting ready to attack him at any moment.

You see boys and girls, sometimes, we are so focused on something that we aren't able to see anything else. It's like we are "blind" to everything except for the thing we are focused on.

Imam Husain (A) knew this. He understood that the people had become so in love with this world and what it contains that they were blind to the truth and chose not to follow what Allah (SWT) wanted them to do. They had forgotten what their true responsibility towards the Imam (A) was. So, this is good reminder to us, because we are waiting for Imam Mahdi (AJ), and so, we want to all make sure we are doing everything that we are supposed, to. That way, we can recognize the Imam (A) and obey him correctly, and not be like the ones who disobeyed Allah (SWT) when they left the Prophet of Islam (S), or the other Prophets, or those who went against Imam Husain (A).

We want to be Imam Mahdi's (AJ) strongest supporters, inshaAllah! Therefore, yesterday when we discussed the letter from Imam Husain (A) to his messenger Muslim ibn Aqeel, we learned that an Imam is appointed by Allah (SWT), and that he has to rule according to the Quran. Another item that the Imam (A) mentioned was that an Imam is someone who has to make sure that the religion of Islam is being followed properly.

So, to make sure that we don't become like the people who will leave their Imam alone, let's discuss what the Imam meant by this. If we look at the people who fought against Imam Husain (A) at that time, you will find that they were people who used to offer Salaah, attend the Jum'ah prayer, go to the masjid often, eat halal food, and even fast. Meaning, they used to do most of the wajib acts that were required of them. However, the way they used to do it was not how Allah wanted, but the way that they wanted. They didn't look for or even research the way Allah (SWT) wanted them to. For example, during the time of Mu'awiyah, he would tell the Muslims, "Pray, fast, and do good deeds." However, he or his people never explained the reasons why these actions should be done. They would even say to those around them that the Quran should not be explained to anyone, and that no one needs to understand what the Quran is saying.

One day, someone came up to Mu'awiyah and asked, "What if someone wants to understand what is being said in the Quran? We can't stop them from asking?"

Mu'awiyah replied, "You are right. So, what we need to do is find people who can explain the rules and Quran the way we want them to. This way, we can make sure that their Islam is not the true Islam, but rather, it is the Islam that we want them to follow."

These evil ideas from Mu'awiyah created the wrong Islam, so people who thought they were following Islam correctly, actually were not. We all have to be very careful not to do this. In order to make sure we don't, here are a few things we need to really understand: (1) we have to understand what Islam is and what we are supposed to do (wajib vs. haram). This means we should be seeking knowledge from our learned scholars, those who have gone and studied Islam from the Hawzah and have a thorough and proper understanding — not our friends who know some Islam, and not people who just claim to know about Islam, but who present incorrect information and an incomplete version of Islam. We have to be careful NOT to listen to people who say things like "You don't have to wear hijab!" or "It's okay if you hair is showing" or "It's okay to listen to music from the most popular bands and singers, as long it's not during adhan time," or even something as wrong as "You don't have to be kind to your parents once you get old enough to make your own decisions."

People who try to lead you away from the truth can never be the true scholars of Islam. We have to be careful about the people we choose to provide us with Islamic knowledge. We need to become suspicious if people begin to say things like, "Oh, Lady Fatima and Imam Husain (A) lived so long ago, they can't be your role models. You need to choose someone who is here with us now."

We know that this is not true! We know that Imam Hasan (A), Imam Husain (A), and all our Imams were leaders not just for that time they were alive, but even today! The values that they had — honesty, kindness, modesty, and obedience to Allah — are characteristics that will never get old; they will remain until the Day of Judgement. So, we have to make sure that we are careful and do not begin forming our own view of what Islam is supposed to be. We must listen to the true scholars, who teach us Islam as it is, as taught to them by the Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (A).
Whenever something difficult would take place in Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq's (A) life, he would say,
"اللهم لا تجعل مصيبتى فى دينى - O Allah, please don't make my trial or my hardship in the practice of my religion." What the Imam (A) meant by this is that, "O Allah, I can be strong during hardships in this world, like maybe not having enough money or not getting a good grade, but please don't let me have a hard time practicing my religion! Don't let me disrespect my parents or miss my Salaah; please make me strong in these areas!"

We have to look at what we do every day and think about how we feel. Do you feel more sad if you accidentally missed your Salaah or if you didn't get an A (a perfect mark) on your test? Do you feel happier when you do something to make Allah (SWT) happy or when you end up doing something that you enjoyed for a few moments, but is

haram? We always have to do our best to make Islam and Allah more important, because this will help us stay away from the wrongdoers, and more importantly, help us not to become the wrongdoers. We also have to do our best and ask for forgiveness if we do something wrong.

Right now, social media and devices have caused a lot of challenges, so maybe this is the first place we have to start. We should be careful about what we see and hear on devices like phones and iPads because our eyes and ears are gateways to our hearts and souls. Also, sometimes people are not careful of what they post on social media; meaning, sometimes people have bad habits, and rather than trying to get rid of those habits, they publicize them by posting them on the internet. For example, people who listen to haram music shouldn't be putting the music they listen to on the internet or sharing it with others, because they would then be encouraging people to partake in behaviors that are not acceptable in Islam. They would not only have to face the consequences of their own sins, but also the sins they encouraged others to perform.

We have to seek help from Allah (SWT) if we find that we are trying to seek pleasure from others, and not from Him. We all have to work really hard and follow all the beautiful ways of life that Allah (SWT) has taught us. If we continue on a path chosen by us, and only us, our souls will become like those of the people who were against Imam Husain (A), who chose to follow only what their hearts desired.

This is not an easy task. When the second verse of Surah Ankabut came down, it stated "Do humans think that they will be left alone after saying 'We believe' and that they will not be tested?"

As soon as Imam Ali (A) heard this verse, he went to the Prophet (S) and asked, "O Prophet of Allah, when will this test come?"

The Prophet (S) replied, "This test will come after I have died. Right now, as I am alive, people are following true Islam and not making up their own understanding of Islam. After I die, things will become confusing, and people will begin to do this."

In another hadith, our Imam (A) tells us:

انّ النّاسَ عَبِيدُ الدُّنْيَا، وَالدِّينُ لَعْقٌ عَلَى أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ يَحُوطُونَهُ مَا دَرَّتْ مَعَايِشُهُمْ فَإِذَا مُحِّصُوا بِالْبَلَاءِ قَلّ الدّيّانُونَ

There will come a time when humans will become servants of the dunya, and the religion of Islam will just be something that hangs off their tongues.

This means that people will just be talking about religion without acting upon it. Also, when it comes to the decision of choosing their world or the religion, they will choose their world, not the religion.

Therefore, one of the most important thing for us to understand tonight is that one of the reasons people fought against Imam Husain (A) was because they forgot to follow the true Islam and began making up their own version of Islam. Today, we have to be careful when doing your wajibaat. For example, if we are going to do hijab, we must be careful to follow it the way it was intended to be followed, not in the way that it is followed by the terms of this world. Learn from the knowledgeable scholars, ask questions to those who have studied, and do your best to follow that which pleases Allah (SWT). This includes learning the proper way to pray, fast, speak to our parents, etc. This way, we are true and ready to uphold the truth that Imam Husain (A) died saving, and so that we are prepared to serve as the true soldiers of Imam Mahdi (AJ)

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِى حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّى سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِىَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّى لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

We have in hadith from Imam as-Sadiq (A) where he talks about the rewards of somebody who sheds a tear for Imam Husain (A) in the hereafter. He says, "Somebody who sheds one tear for Imam Husain (A) [in this world] will not be shedding tears on the Day of Judgment, and they will be making Sayyidah Fatimah (A) very happy. Furthermore, on the Day of Judgment, that person will be in a special gathering in the company of Imam Husain (A). There will be a cry that tells them and everyone else with them, 'Enter into Paradise,' but they will refuse to go, because they'll be busy with Imam Husain (A). Heaven will be a secondary prize at that point. The heavenly creatures that have been created for them in paradise will come out and call them, but they'll ignore them, because they'll be busy with their Imam and master, Imam Husain (A). That will be a majlis of so much happiness that they won't even raise their heads to look at those heavenly creatures that are calling them." (Kaamil az-Ziyaarat).

So, you see, this crying for Imam Husain (A) is a blessing for us. These tears carry a heavy reward. Tonight, we cry and remember two very dear and special companions of Imam Husain (A). These were two individuals who played a very special role in Karbala due to their great age, taqwa, and knowledge. Their names were Habib ibn Madhahir and Muslim ibn Awsaja.

Muslim ibn Awsaja was actually a companion of our Prophet (S) — that's how old he was. He was well-known for so many things, such as reciting the Quran, his detachment from the dunya, and his courage and bravery in battle. They would tell stories about Muslim in war. There was one story about a battle he participated in where the Muslims were attacked. Even before they could even get their ranks ready, Muslim ibn Awsaja stood on his own, ready to defend the Muslims, and managed to take down six of the enemy soldiers. So, he was very brave and valiant.
The other special companion, was a dear friend of Imam Husain (A), Habib ibn Madhahir, who was also very well-known. He was a companion of his father, Amir ul-Mo'mineen, and he was among the special companions — the Ashab us-sir — who had access to the special teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (A) - those teachings which others did not have the capacity to bear.

Habib had a very deep connection to Imam Husain (A). He signed the first letter inviting Imam Husain (A) to Kufa. When he realized that the Kufans had turned their back on the Imam (A), he and Muslim ibn Awsaja decided to make their way to Karbala no matter what. Others saw that Kufa was surrounded and thought if they tried to escape, they would be caught and imprisoned, or even killed. But Habib and Muslim knew that this was something they must do no matter what. They said, "We must join and defend our master Imam Husain (A).

Perhaps it was the case that the Imam (A) was longing for their company. Some say that it was as if the Imam (A) had left a standard that he was waiting for Habib to carry. We can only imagine when these two companions joined the army, how happy the rest must have been, especially the women, that Habib and Muslim are with us.

On the 9th of Muharram, Habib asks Imam Husain (A), "O my master, will you give me permission to go to a nearby tribe called the Bani Asad. They have many young people. I'm sure if I talk to them, they will join us." The Imam (A)

grants him permission, so he goes and talks to them and actually manages to convince them. There are about 90 young people who say, "Yes, we will join you" and make their way towards Imam Husain (A).

When Umar ibn Saad finds out what Habib has done, though, he sends 400 people to block their way, and Habib ends up coming back alone.

Imagine, Habib is returning to his master all alone. Maybe he is wondering to himself, "Will my Imam be disappointed? I said I would bring people, but I haven't been successful." But what does Imam Husain (A) say when he hears what happened? La hawla wa la quwata ila billah al aliyul adheem. Look at the status of Habib. When he is reminded of the powder of Allah in this universe, He feels better, and any sort of fear or embarrassment goes away.

On the day of Ashura, Muslim ibn Awsaja seeks permission from his master Imam Husain (A) to defend him. He fights bravely, even despite his old age. But after fighting against such a large army, the weakness and his wounds overcome him. He falls to the ground, but he is not alone. Imam Husain (A) runs to the side of his old friend and cries out, "May Allah have mercy on you, O Muslim!"

His dear friend, Habib, rushes to his side. He bends down near him. Muslim is breathing his last breaths. Habib says, "O Muslim, it is very difficult for me to bear your loss, but be happy, because you'll be entering paradise. Just tell me one thing, is there anything I can do for you my dear friend?" With his last breaths, Muslim points to Imam Husain (A) and tells Habib, "O Habib, my only wish is concerning him. Fight in his way until you, too, are killed!"

Habib takes the place of Muslim and defends Imam Husain (A). He calls out so bravely, "Ana Habib wa abhi Madhahir — If you don't know me, I am Habib, the son of Madhahair. We are more purified than you. We will come to the aid of the best of people."

He fights so bravely, but Habib is an old man as well. Eventually, they surround him, one hits him from the front and one from the back, knocking him to the ground. He tries to stand, but one of the soldiers raises his sword. He was so greedy, this man. He knew that the more heads he could collect, the more rewards he would receive from Yazid. This man rushes back to kufa with his war booty on his saddle, dangling from the side. When he enters Kufa, according to some narrations, as he heads to and from the palace, he realizes he's not alone. There's a young boy following him wherever he goes.

He asks the young boy, "Why is it that you are following me?"
The boy says, "No, it's nothing."
The soldier replies, "No you must tell me."
Finally, the boy says, "You see that head dangling from your saddle? That is the head of my father, Habib ibn Madhahir. Can you please give me the head of my father?"

The soldier says, "If I give you this head, then I won't have anything to give to Ibn Ziyad and earn my reward."
Look at the attachment of this young boy to the head of his father. Now, imagine the women and children of the Ahlul Bayt (A) in the court of Yazid when they see what has happened to the beloved head of their Imam Husain (A).

Speech #4: True Success

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِى الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn what the true definition of success is, as defined by Islam (through the Quran and Ahlul Bayt).
- Children will learn that we can be successful by performing actions that bring us closer to Allah.

Lecture Content:

Tonight is the 4th night of Muharram. Before we begin with the topic for tonight, I want to share with you a story of one of our great scholars, who dedicated his life to serving the cause of Imam Husain (A), Sayyid Qadhi Tabataba'i. Sayyid Qadhi was the teacher of some of our greatest ulama, like Allamah Tabataba'i and Ayatullah Bahjat. When you look at his life and see what made him such a successful person, — you see, he was very close to Allah and the Ahlul Bayt (A) — one of the things that made him so successful was his devotion towards Imam Husain (A). He used to say, do not let a week pass by without having a Majlis of Imam Husain (A) in your home, even if it's only 2-3 people. Let this be a tradition that you keep alive. And especially during the 10 days of Muharram, participate in the Majaalis. He would tell his students that if anyone wants to achieve any success in becoming closer to Allah, it is not possible except without the special attention and help of Imam Husain (A).

They say that his love for Imam Husain (A) was so great that he would have majaalis in his home. Of course, people would remove their shoes before entering. Now, while people were busy after the Majalis having tea and catching up with each other, he would secretly sneak outside to where the shoes were. Now, imagine, this was a great, old scholar. He used to use his 'abaa to wipe the shoes of the mourners of Aba Abdillah and then turn them and face them so that people could easily put them on as they exit.

When someone saw him doing this, he said, "O Sayyid, you are an old man, a great scholar! Why don't you let somebody else do this?"

He said, "No, I want to show Allah that in my heart, I am truly a follower of Imam Husain (A)."

In this speech, I would like to speak about a special line from Ziyarat Ashura. Now, we try to recite Ziyarat Ashura often in Muharram - at least on the Day of Ashura, and at other times as well. It's a special Ziyaarah that has many beautiful concepts and teachings in it. In the Ziyaarah, after we say Salaam to Imam Husain (A), and distance ourselves from those who oppressed him, we make a du'a. It's a very short du'a, but it's a very special du'a:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي عِنْدَكَ وَجِيهاً بِالْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ

Allahummaj'alni 'indaka wajeehan bil Husayni 'alayhissalaam fid-dunya wal aakhirah
O Allah, make me someone who you consider to be special and respected, through Husain (A), in this world and the hereafter.

What a beautiful du'a! We are asking Allah to make us wajih, or special and respected in His eyes. In order for us to understand this word wajih, think of this example. Imagine the king of a land. This king has many subjects whom he rules over, but there are a few people in the kingdom who are special. They get special attention from the king. He has special meetings with them. He makes them examples for the rest of the kingdom. These are the people who are special and respected in the kingdom. In this du'a, we tell Allah, "O Allah, make me special and respected by you, but let this happen through Imam Husain (A)."

What I'd like to talk about tonight is this concept of being respected and successful. Boys and girls, we're living in a society that has its own definition for what it means to be successful. The majority of people do not believe in God, or even if they do, it doesn't really affect their lives. So their definition of success is one that has nothing to do with God.

InshaAllah you all are working very hard in school, and pretty soon, you'll be entering college and university, and thinking about a career. When you go out into the real world, and start working towards your career, there's a lot of pressure out there to be "successful". What do they mean by "success"? Success is making it big. Those people who have more money and fame are more successful. If you make it big, you're successful. But if you don't make it big, you're not considered to be successful. You might be just average, or in some cases considered as a failure Islam, on the other hand, gives us a different definition of successful. We can see this from this line of Ziyarat Ashura. What is this definition? Let me tell you a story that will help us understand.

One day, Prophet Ibrahim (A) was looking in the mirror and saw that after living in this world for many years, his hair had turned gray. He had lived through his childhood, his youth, and adulthood. For most people, when they see gray hair, they feel sad. They think now that they are getting old, the happy days of their life are over, and they only have a little bit of time left in this world. But look at what Prophet Ibrahim (A) says when he sees that gray hair.

He says "All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, who has caused me to reach this age, and I have not even for a moment disobeyed him." So, you see, he isn't sad at all. No, instead, he is very happy! Why? Because looks at his life and sees that he has been very successful. For him, the definition of being successful is that he hasn't disobeyed Allah for even a moment. This is what makes him so happy. This is his definition of success.

Prophet Muhammad (S) has said, "When Allah sees a young person busy worshipping Him, he praises this person to the angels. He says, 'Look at My servant! Most people are busy in this world chasing things that are haraam, but this is someone who has left what is haraam for My sake.'"

Now, boys and girls, what we're seeing from these stories and from this line of Ziyarat Ashura is

that Islam gives us a very clear definition of success: it's living a life in obedience in Allah, and doing what is going to allow me to become closer to Allah — that's what is going to make me happy and successful. But sometimes, when we go in the real world, we are more worried about what other people will think, not what Allah will think. We have to be very careful of this.

There is an example of someone in Karbala who thought he was being successful by turning against Imam Husain (A). His name was Umar ibn Sa'ad (la'natullahi alayh), and he was the commander of Yazid's army. The problem was that he wasn't thinking of the real definition of success — he was using the dunyawi meaning of success - the worldly meaning.

You see, Yazid's governor, Ibn Ziyad, had promised Umar that if he was able to keep Imam Husain (A) from Kufa, he would become the governor of Rey, which was a very important city, and at that time the capital of Persia. The governor of Rey would have a lot of power and a lot of wealth. So, of course, Umar had a choice. Was he going to choose "success" in this dunya by becoming the governor of Rey, or was he going to choose real success by joining Imam Husain (A) and making Allah happy?

So, now that we've defined what true success is — becoming closer to Allah and doing those things that please Him, the question is, how do we get success in this dunya? How do we become those who are wajih? Well, whenever someone wants to become successful, they always choose a role model whose path and example they can follow. Well boys and girls, we have the best examples — 14 of them! That's right, the Ahlul Bayt (A) have given us so much advice and so many practical tips on how we can become successful in this dunya and the hereafter.

In Nahjul Balagha, Imam Ali (A) gives us the key to success, to becoming wajih or considered by Allah to be special. He says that in order to truly be successful, we need to do what we do in this world for the sake of what comes after it and for the sake of Allah. We should always keep the hereafter in mind when we make our decisions, and realize that the choices we make have consequences. One day, the results of all of our choices and actions will be presented to us. Someone who always does things while keeping in mind the hereafter will be wajih and special with allah. Whatever this person needs from the dunya comes to him or her. . They get both the dunya and the akhirah. They become a king of both the world and the hereafter. That person gains standing in front of Allah. Allah does not hold back from them anything they ask for.

Let's understand what Imam Ali (A) is saying. He's not saying to stay at home all day on the prayer mat, praying to Allah. No. We need to go to school and study hard. If it is our responsibility to do so, eventually we might need to get a job, work, and fulfill our responsibilities towards others. BUT we need to do so for the sake of the hereafter, not just for this world. We need to work hard, but have the right intention. We need to think about what we are working for. Is it just to gain a bunch of money? Or are we working to fill our responsibility with Allah? It should be the second reason. When we work hard for this reason, we are being successful, and Allah will provide us with whatever we need.

One time, the Prophet (S) was coming back from battle. As he entered the city, the Muslims who had stayed behind were very happy that the Prophet (S) had returned. They all lined up to welcome

him. One elderly man by the name of Sa'ad walks up to the Prophet (S) and shakes his hand. The Prophet (S) shakes the man's hand and finds that it's very rough. He asks the man, "O Sa'ad, how come your hand is so rough?" He replies, "Ya Rasulallah, for years and years, I've worked hard in my field, and I've used rope to build wells. I've been doing this every day, so as a result, my hands have become hard like this." Rasulullah asks, "Why is it that you're doing this?" He says, "I'm doing this so I can provide for my family." Rasulullah (S) bends down and kisses Sa'ad's hands. This is the type of work that the Prophet (S) appreciates — he's working hard to make Allah happy by supporting his family. He is fulfilling his responsibility, so he is being successful.

You see, the Ahlul Bayt (A) lived a life of success. Every action they did was successful! And this might surprise you, but they were not poor. They worked hard and actually had quite a bit of money, but they would share and give away their money. At one point Imam Ali (a) could have even fed the entire city with his wealth! And they would do this. They would give away everything that they had. They knew how to work in this dunya, but they had the right intention! They did all this for the sake of Allah, and Allah took care of them. They would work hard for the sake of Allah, they would worship Allah in the best way they could, and Allah took care of them.

What does it mean to study and work in this world but to keep in mind the hereafter? Let's pretend you want to be a doctor. That's a great occupation to have! Doctors have the opportunity to serve Allah in one of the best ways by helping others! But, you have to make sure your intention is correct. Are you becoming a doctor because you want to gain a lot of money? Or is it because you want to become closer to Allah by helping and serving others?

Or, let's say there's a talented student who has been gifted with Allah. This student barely needs to study for any exam, and without trying he/she always does well on his homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. Now suppose that during his spare time, he never tries to learn and instead wastes all of his time on things which are not productive. Because he is talented, he feels arrogant towards others and doesn't treat them kindly. He doesn't show respect to his parents and other family members, and is not thankful for Allah's blessings. He doesn't care too much about learning how to pray properly, and doesn't give much importance to praying on time.

Now take another student who is not so gifted naturally. But he tries hard, is humble and pleasant towards others, thankful for Allah's blessings and eager to worship Him. As a result of his efforts, Allah gives him more blessings, and he is able to steadily improve his grades, even though at the end of the year, his class rank is not as high as the previous student.

Now the first student might be successful from the perspective of getting good grades and being at the top of his class. But from the Islamic perspective, his success might actually be the cause of his downfall! That's because his talents have made him arrogant, ungrateful, and mean. If he doesn't do tawbah and reform, he might get more and more "worldly" success but he is definitely not taking the path of becoming wajih or regarding in a special way by Allah.

So, you see, we should all try our hardest to be successful — not by the standards set by the society around us, but rather by trying to become closer to Allah by trying hard in all parts of our lives - in what we learn, the way act and treat others, and the choices that we make. We ask Allah to give us

that knowledge that will help us to move closer to Him in this dunya, and we pray that He helps us all to be successful in this dunya and the hereafter.

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

On this 4th night of Muharram, let us spend some time to look at one of the companions of Imam Husain (A). Before we talk about him, I would like to mention that the companions of Imam Husain (a) were extraordinary people. It's not the case that they just happened to be in the right place at the right time — no. These companions were people who lived their lives remembering Allah and working on improving and perfecting themselves to the point that they earned the honor of being with Imam Husain (A).

One of these companions is someone named Burair ibn Abdul Rahman al-Ansari. Burair was a great companion of Abu Abdillah and a shaheed of Karbala, but perhaps one that we don't talk about enough. Burair was well-known in the city of Kufa and came from a very well-respected family. He was not only a famous qari - reciter of the Quran - but also a teacher of the Quran. He would sit at the Masjid and teach people how to recite and about the meaning of the Quran.

When Burair hears that Imam Husain (A) has been forced to leave Medina and has gone to Mecca, he leaves Kufa and heads to Mecca to meet the Imam (A), and then stays with him until the end. On the 2nd of Muharram, when they reach Karbala, Burair renews his promise and pledge of allegiance to the Imam (A). He says "O Son of Rasulullah, Allah has gifted us with this opportunity to fight with you! Even if our limbs are cut off defending you, we are willing to sacrifice that and receive the intercession of your grandfather on the Day of Judgment."

You see, boys and girls, for someone who is a servant of Allah, to know what their responsibility is and to have that being presented to them is the greatest pleasure, even if that means sacrificing everything.

Burair is someone whom the Imam (A) depends on on Ashura. Leading up to the battle, the Imam (A) doesn't want to just go and fight the enemy. He wants to first try to guide them by presenting the truth and show them what they're doing is wrong. So, at one time, Imam Husain (A) asks Burair to go talk to the enemy. What an honor to be chosen by the Imam (A) to represent him and go and

talk to them!

Burair addresses the army and tells them, "You are about to kill the son of Rasulullah! Is this the ajr and reward that you are going to give to the Prophet?" You see, he's referring to the verse of the Quran where Allah tells the Prophet (S), "Say (O Muhammad): I do not ask of you any reward for it except love for my near relatives" (42:23).

Instead of listening, they say, "No, we're not even going to give Imam Husain (A) water — the same water that the animals drink from!"

On the day of Ashura, Imam Husain (A) gives his companions permission to fight, one by one. One of these companions is Burair. Burair is invited by the enemy army to fight them, and he does so bravely, but at one point he is ambushed. There is somebody wants to attack him but, he sees that this is Burair and says to others, "Don't you see that this is Burair — the one who taught us Quran?!" But there is a man there named Ka'b, and Kab doesn't care because he's reached such a low point. Even the Quran doesn't matter to him anymore. He hurls his spear towards Burair, bloodthirsty and ruthless, striking him on his back. Once it makes contact, he jumps on him with his sword, and he is the one to make Burair a shaheed. He is proud of what he has done to this teacher of the Qur'an and noble companion of the grandson of Rasulullah!

But when Ka'b eventually comes home to his family after the war, everyone is disgusted by his actions, because Burair was famous and respected among people for his knowledge and his character. His wife told him, "You attacked the son of Fatima (A) and killed one of the best qaris?! What a horrible things you have done! I swear by God that I will never talk to you again!"
La'anatullahi 'ala al-qawm idh-dhaalimeen

Speech #5: Qualities of a Shi'a

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِله-ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِى الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn that there is a difference between a lover and follower of the Ahlul Bayt (A).
- Children will learn some of the characteristics that we should embody and uphold as the Shi'as of Imam Ali (A).

Lecture Content:

Tonight is the fifth night of Muharram. We thank Allah for giving us the Tawfeeq to spend another night in His remembrance and having the honor of mourning for our beloved Imam Husain (A). Tonight, we're going to discuss some of the qualities that a Shi'a – a true follower – of Imam Husain (A) should have. We have many ahadith that tell us how people used to go to the Imams and say, "O Imam, we are your true Shi'a." For example, one group of people came to Imam ar-Ridha (A) and said, "O Imam ar-Ridha, we are your Shi'a." At this time, like has been reported in some of the other ahadith, the Imam (A) corrected them and said, "No, you are not our Shi'as; you are our muhhib - you like us and love us, but a Shi'a is a person who follows the path of the Ahlul Bayt and obeys them, and who acts like the Ahlul Bayt."

That's why we have these two words: muhhib – someone who loves the Imams — and Shi'a – someone who follows them. We need to try to be both. Love alone is not enough. If we just love our mothers and we don't listen to them, that's not true love. If you always show your mother and father love and respect and tell them you love them, but when they ask you to do something, you don't do it, that love is incomplete. Love needs to be side by side with following that person – of course, as long as it's Islamically okay. So, that's one way of showing our love – when our mom asks us to clean our room or set the table, we are showing our love by listening to her and following her.

These days and nights, we are learning about the events of Karbala and the lessons from Karbala. One of the lessons we need to learn is how to become better followers of the Ahlul Bayt – better Shi'as. I would like to present to you a hadith by Imam Ali (A) where he discusses some of the qualities of the Shi'as of the Ahlul Bayt (A). This hadith has 7 parts to it:

شيعتنا المتباذلون فى ولايتنا ، المتحابون فى مودتنا ، المتزاورون فى احياء امرنا ، الذين إذا غضبوا لم يظلموا ، وان رضوا لم يسرفوا ، بركة على من جاوروا ، سلم لمن خالطوا

1. شيعتنا المتباذلون فى ولايتنا

   The first characteristic Imam Ali (A) says is "Our Shi'as give and sacrifice for the sake of our wilayah (meaning for the sake of following the Ahlul Bayt)." When a Shi'a has to make a choice between something they have to do for the Ahlul Bayt and something they would like to do for themselves, they choose to do what makes the Imam happy, even if that means giving up a lot and sacrificing. When they see someone in need and they can help that person, they do so, and they feel a special responsibility towards the followers of the Ahlul Bayt (A).

   We have lots of stories in history that show that true Shi'as have to sacrifice. Harun ar-Rashid, who was the evil leader during the time of Imam ar-Ridha (A), had a son named Qasim. Of course, if you are the son of the king, you live in his palace and have many luxuries and physical blessings. But Qasim, unlike his father, loved the Ahlul Bayt and was a Shi'a. So, he left his father's kingdom and

went to a place called Basra. There, he looked for a job and started working in the lowest position he could find. He would say, "My love for the Ahlul Bayt is so great that I don't want to eat the food that comes from my father's court because of his enmity to the Ahlul Bayt." He gave all the glamour and luxury of being the king's son to live a life that wasn't mixed with the hate of the Ahlul Bayt.

2. The second characteristic of a Shi'a is المتحابون فى مودتنا - they become friends with each other, and they choose to become friends according to who else also loves the Ahlul Bayt. One of the criteria they have for choosing friends is that those people should love and follow the Ahlul Bayt. Remember, there's a difference between friends and the people that we have to be around. When we go to school, or play sports, there are people we have to be around. We have to be kind and respectful to all the people around us. But when we pick our friends, and in particular our close friends, we should pick those people who love the Ahlul Bayt and help us to get closer to Allah. Sometimes, we forget that and want to be friends with those who are popular for other reasons, or have the latest electronic device, or who always are up to date with the latest fashion, but we should remember that Imam Ali (A) says to pick friends who also love the Ahlul Bayt (A). This is because we know these types of friends have the same values as us and will encourage us to make good choices. For example, they might remind us to pray on time when we are at their house. They will also help us stay away from those bad choices, like eating haram food or watching shows that we should not be watching. And they will help encourage us to be the best we can.

3. The third characteristic that Imam Ali tells us is المتزاورون فى احياء امرنا - Shi'as go and visit each other. In Islam, there's so much emphasis on sitting and meeting and hanging out with each other. But, Imam Ali (A) tells us there is more to it than just hanging out. When the Shi'as and friends get together, they do so with the purpose of احياء امرنا (ihyaa amrinaa) - they bring alive our teachings. They don't just sit and waste time talking about useless things. They talk and discuss about how they can become better people; they discuss ahadith and different teachings the Ahlul Bayt (A) have taught us. For example, they may get together and make time to play in the Masjid or center, but they also listen to speeches that are given by learned scholars. They might also have fun while doing cool projects together, like planting trees, cleaning schools, or making kits for the homeless.

   Imam as-Sadiq (A) says, "One day, I was walking with my father, Imam al-Baqir (A), and we came to the Masjid. There was a group of Shi'as who were talking and hanging out and having a good conversation. My father said, 'I swear by Allah, I love these kinds of gatherings. From these gatherings, a beautiful perfume goes up to the heavens, making it smell beautiful.'"

   So, you see, it's important for us to hang out and have these conversations. Sometimes, we don't find friends who are close. Alhamdulillah, some of us are blessed to have Islamic centers and Islamic schools where there are a lot of kids our age to be friends with. But what about when there aren't? We live in a country that the majority is non-Muslim. Let me tell you a very interesting story. There was a man who moved to a country where there weren't many believers. One day, he came to visit Imam as-Sadiq (A) and said, "I miss you so much. When I was here, I could come see you, and there were so many believers I could talk to and hang out with."

   The Imam gave a beautiful reply. He said, "You - one person in that community that doesn't have any believers - are like an entire society, an entire ummah. But you have two responsibilities. First, remember and practice our teachings. Second, invite people towards us and our teachings."

   For us here, where we live with many non-Muslims, it's especially important that through our words, our akhlaq, and our behavior, we teach people. We can tell them that in Islam, we are taught to be respectful to each other and we're taught to respect our family. Through our behavior, by always doing the right thing, we can show people what Islam teaches us. For example, if someone is asking you to do something bad, like take something that doesn't belong to you, cheat on a test, or make fun of another classmate, you can tell them that this is something that you are not supposed to do in Islam.

4. The next characteristic of a Shi'a is الذين إذا غضبوا لم يظلموا. When our Shi'as become angry, they don't act out and do something bad. There's a beautiful story that shows this. One day, Imam Ali (A) was walking, and he saw a servant who was crying. He asked what was wrong. She told him, "My master asked me to go buy dates, so I did. When I came back, he told me that these dates are bad quality and I should go back and return them. When I went to return them, the storekeeper said that he won't take them back. So now, I don't know what to do. My master is going to be so upset!"

   Imam Ali (A) got up and took the bag and they walked to the store owner. Imam Ali (A) said to the storekeeper, "These dates are not good, and this girl is just a middleman. Her master is not happy with these dates; please take them back." This store owner didn't know that he was talking to Imam Ali (A). He put his hand on Imam Ali's (A) chest and pushed him back. When the other people in the bazaar saw this, they quickly went to him and told him, "Don't you know this is Imam Ali?! He is the lion of Allah!"

   When this man realized what he had done, he said, "I'm so sorry! I didn't know! Please forgive me." Imam Ali (A) said, "Okay, I forgive you, but I have a condition. My condition is that you need to fix yourself. You can't have this kind of behavior and these kinds of actions. If you do this, then I'm okay with you and forgive you."

   So when you get angry, don't react badly. Sometimes, at home, we get angry with our family members, or at school or at gatherings at centers and Masjids, we get mad at our friends. It's important to ask who is in charge – our anger or ourselves? We have to remind ourselves that our Imam says a Shi'a is someone who does not act badly when they're angry. They don't let their anger control them.

5. The 5th characteristic is وان رضوا لم يسرفوا - that when they're happy, they do not waste nor exceed the limits. This is very important. Sometimes, when we have parties or we have people over, or we want to have some kind of celebration, we buy too much or spend too much, and too much of it goes to waste. We have to be careful and remember that we cannot waste. Why does the Imam say not to waste when we're happy? Because sometimes when we're happy, we're so busy that we forget to be God conscious and cautious, and we forget that wasting is haram. We forget that there are so many people who are poor and needy, and we are wasting. Another type of waste is taking more than we need and eating more than we should. So if we're at a gathering and there are cookies, and we take more than we should, even if we eat them all, it's still a type of waste. Yet another type of waste is when we waste ourselves by not using the potential that Allah put in us to reach perfection, and instead make ourselves busy with unimportant things.

6. The 6th characteristic of a Shi'a is بركة على من جاوروا – the Shi'as are nice to their neighbors and a source of blessings for them. It's very important that as Muslims, we're nice to our neighbors. When you're leaving your house and you see them, you should wave and say hi. You can talk to your parents when it's Ramadhan or Eid about making something for your neighbors and showing them about islam. Every neighbor that we show our good akhlaq to through our actions will tell their friends, and soon, people will realize what a beautiful religion we have.

7. The last characteristic is سلم لمن خالطوا - when they are with other people, they act with such great akhlaq. Whoever you work with, whether in a group at school, or when standing in line at a store, or going to someone's house with your parents, the way you act with them should make them say "Wow!" We have ahadith from our Imams that say when you're in a place, be our gem, our jewel. When people see, you they should say, "Wow, where do you get this great akhlaq from? Who do you follow? What religion do you follow?" Without even learning about Islam, they should see the beautiful akhlaq we have.

So, remember, if we want to be a true Shi'a of Imam Husain (A), we have to show we love the Ahlul Bayt (A) by following them. During these ten nights, we are spending time and leaving our regular routines to come to the masjid, wearing black clothes, crying for Imam Husain (A), learning and showing we want to become Shi'a of Imam Husain (A) and we want to become better people. Let's take these lessons we learn and apply them to our lives, so that we can actually see these changes and become the true Shi'a, inshaAllah.

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Let us take our hearts and souls to the sands of Karbala, hundreds of years ago, on the night of the 9th of Muharram. Imam Husain (A) calls his companions into a tent and says, "The enemy doesn't want to kill anyone except me. Save yourselves tonight, and leave! After killing me, they won't come after you. May Allah have mercy on you! Save yourselves…I free you of the pledge you made to support me. Go!"

Imam Husain (A) gave them a chance to save their lives, to escape and return to the their families. He even blew out the candles, so they could leave without being seen or embarrassed. But do any of his true companions choose to leave? No. They don't even hesitate for a second.

One companion stands up and says, "How can we leave you?! I swear by Allah that even if I am killed and then brought back to life, and then killed again, and burnt, and my ashes are scattered around, and this happens seventy times, even then I will never leave you!"

History has not seen companions like this, sitting now, shoulder to shoulder, in the silence of an empty desert. Imam Husain (A) himself has said, "Surely, I do not know companions more faithful and better than my companions."

The men and women who are gathered in Karbala are with the Imam (A) both in body and spirit. Each of them knows that Imam Husain (A) is not just the leader of this religion; he is, in reality, religion itself. And to leave him alone is to leave the message of Allah itself.

Soon, the night begins to hum, like the sound of buzzing bees, as all those in Imam Husain's (A) camp busy themselves in prayer. For many of them, this is the last night they will spend on earth. And there is no greater act in their eyes than spending each moment talking to their creator. The night passes in this way, until dawn rises on the 10th day of Muharram – Ashura.

In Yazeed's camp, the soldiers prepare for battle. One of the commanders named Hurr begins to listen to those around him. What is this he hears? They are planning on killing Imam Husain (A)?

As if Hurr has called him with his thoughts, Imam Husain (A) steps onto the plain, as powerful as a lion. He raises his hand and calls, "Is there none who will help us in the name of Allah? Is there none who will defend the family of the Prophet?"

It is as if Imam Husain's (A) words are an earthquake that is dividing the world before Hurr's very eyes. It is like he is standing at the edge of a cliff. In front of him, there is a deep drop and crashing waves. Behind him, there is a ship that will carry him safely across – and this ship is Imam Husain (A). The truth which Hurr had been blind to before has now become clear. Now, he must choose. Will he ignore Imam Husain's (A) call? Will he continue to fight on the side of falsehood, knowing that this army is stronger and larger? Will he stay here, where he will not die; where gold

and power wait for him after the battle is over?

Or will he cross over to the side of truth – knowing that Imam Husain's (A) army is smaller and will be defeated in only a few hours? Knowing that no wealth or power awaits him at the end, only death? Knowing that he will lose everything he has worked his entire life for, only to be killed in a few moments?

Hurr knows which choice to make. On one side, it seems like there is victory, but that victory is only in this world, and it will only last for a few years. On the other side, it seems like there is defeat, but it is a true victory; it is the pleasure of Allah (swt), which will last forever.

He says to himself, "I find myself between Heaven and Hell. And by Allah, I will not choose anything over Paradise, even if I am cut into pieces and burnt." Immediately, he mounts his horse and rides towards Imam Husain's (A) camp, his hands on his head like a prisoner, crying the words of his heart, "O Allah! I am running towards You, so accept me, for I have put fear into the hearts of Your friends and the children of the Prophet's grandson."

When Hurr approaches Imam Husain (A), the shame is almost too much to bear. "Forgive me, O Grandson of the Prophet! I am the one who stopped you…and forced you to come to this land, Forgive me…" Imam Husain smiles and opens his arms, "I forgive you, Hurr. May Allah accept your tawbah and repentance."

Hadhrat Hurr takes permission from the Imam and then rushes towards the battlefield to face the army which he had just been a member of a few moments ago. But now, he is as different from them as the night from the day. Because unlike them, when he was faced with truth, he did not choose to look away.

He fights with the strength of a thousand men, but there are so many of them and only one of him. When his body is finally covered in wounds, he kneels on the ground and cries, "Assalamualayka Ya Sayyidi! Peace be upon you, O my Master! Accept my final farewell!"

Imam Husain (A) hears his call and runs to the battlefield, kneeling beside Hadhrat Hurr's broken body. He knows that the sacrifice of this man, who was with him physically for a short amount of time, but was a true companion of his spirit for ever, will stand as a lesson for all time.

At some point in our lives, each of us will stand in the same position that Hadhrat Hurr did. On one hand, we will be tempted to do something that makes us happy, even though we know it's wrong. We might want to watch something we shouldn't or be friends with people who are a bad influence on us. Or maybe we will struggle with doing something that Allah has asked us to because we worry what others might think of us. But then, we will be reminded of the example of Hadhrat Hurr, which will remind us to make the right choice — the good choice that will make Allah and our Imam (AJ) happy. We will look at Hadhrat Hurr and remember that it does not matter what anyone else thinks of us, only what Allah (swt) thinks about us. And if He is pleased with us, then we will find success, not just in this world, but also in the next.

Imam Husain (A) gently wipes the blood from Hadhrat Hurr's face and whispers, "You are indeed Hurr (free), as your mother named you. You are free both in this world and the Hereafter." The skies of Karbala watch as the soul of Hadhrat Hurr rises to the next world and is greeted by Prophet Muhammad (S). InshaAllah the Prophet (S) may one day await all of us if we are brave enough to choose to be amongst the companions of Imam Husain (A).

If we are brave enough to choose to be like Hurr.
If we are brave enough to choose to be free.
Inna illahi wa inna ilayhi rajioon.

Speech #6: Actively Awaiting the Dhuhoor

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِله-ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn that we are blessed to be living in the time of ghaybah, but also have responsibilities towards our Imam (AJ).
- Children will learn that waiting for the Imam (AJ) means to actively await him by performing actions that will please Allah, and thus, hasten his dhuhoor.

Lecture Content:

Alhamdulillah, we thank Allah for allowing us to come together once more to remember our dear Imam Husain (A) and the important messages he has taught us. We are all sitting here because we love Imam Husain (A) and recognize that he is one of our Imams and guides. Unfortunately, during the time of Imam Husain (A), many people did not recognize that he was the Imam (A) of their time or follow his guidance. We pray that Allah protects us from making the same mistake. In order to do this, we need to recognize and always be aware of who the Imam of our time is. We all know that we are living in the time of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), but do we realize the importance of this? Boys and girls, we are living in a very special time. We are living in the time of the Ghaybah, or occultation, where we cannot physically see our Imam (AJ). I know this is a very difficult time for all of us, but I want to share with you a story that might make you feel a little bit better:

One day, Abu Khalid, a companion of Imam as-Sajjad (A), asked the Imam (A) to name all the Imams for him. Imam as-Sajjad (A) went through the Imams and listed them one by one. When he got to the last Imam, Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), Imam as-Sajjad (A) said, "O Abu Khalid! Surely, the people who live during the ghaybah and are awaiting the dhuhoor [of the Imam] are better than the people of any other time!"

So, you see boys and girls, we are blessed! Alhamdulillah, we have been given such a great honor to be alive during the ghaybah. But you'll notice that the Imam (A) didn't just say those people who are alive during this time, but also who are waiting for the dhuhoor. Tonight, we want to talk about what it actually means to be waiting for the dhuhoor, or return or re-emergence, of our beloved Imam (AJ).

You see, there are two types of waiting. The first type is called passive waiting. This is when you are waiting for something to happen, but you are not doing anything about it except sitting there. For example, you might be waiting for dinner time because you are hungry. Rather than helping your mom with dinner, you just sit and watch TV until dinner is ready. This is called passive waiting.

The other type of waiting is called active waiting. This is where you are waiting for something to happen, and you are doing something in the meantime so that this event can happen sooner. For example, you are helping your mom cook dinner, so that it can be ready sooner.

Brothers and sisters, when it comes to waiting for the return of our Imam (AJ), we need to be sure that we are waiting actively! While we are waiting for his return, we should do everything we can to make it come by quickly. While our Imam (AJ) is not with us, we should be anxious and sad until he comes back to us. Let me give you an example.

Imagine that a mother is at the store and she loses her young child, who is only 2 or 3 years old. Is she just going to sit around on a bench until he comes back? No, she will be running through the aisles, calling out his name, and doing everything she can to find him.

This is how we should be with our Imam (AJ). I don't mean we should literally be running around looking for him. I

mean that we should be doing everything we can do to hasten (or quicken) his return. If we want our Imam (AJ) to come back quicker, then we should be at his service. Imam as-Sadiq (A) has told us that, "If I was alive [during the time of the 12th Imam], I would serve him all the days of my life."

So, this is waiting and serving is a great honor, and we can do this through our actions. Tonight, I want to share with you all a few things that we can do to actively wait for the dhuhoor, as taught to us by the Ahlul Bayt (A).

The first responsibility we have during the dhuhoor of our Imam (AJ) is to know him and create a relationship with him. We have to learn about him, but not just the facts, like his birthday. We have to learn about him in a way that we form a deep connection with him. Our relationship can even be as simple as reciting Du'a Allahuma Kun li Waliyyik… with an awareness of what we are saying or saying a simple "Assalamualyka Ya Baqiyatullah!" The point is that we know our Imam (AJ) and have a connection with him. One way we can do this is by remembering him every morning when we wake up and saying salaam to him.

There is another du'a that we are recommended to recite every morning. This du'a is called Du'a al-Ahd, where we make a promise and oath to our Imam (AJ) that we will always support him and act according to the instructions of Islam. According to our scholars, if we recite this du'a for 40 mornings in a row, with understanding, we will definitely be amongst the supporters of our Imam (AJ), and if we die before the dhuhoor, we will even be brought back to life to support and defend him!

The second responsibility we have to our Imam (AJ) as we actively wait for his return is doing tawassul to Allah through him. What does this mean? Well, you see, we can always ask Allah for our du'as directly, and inshaAllah He will answer them (as long as they are good for us). But let me share a little secret with you that can get your du'as answered even faster. The secret is called tawassul. Tawassul is when you ask Allah through someone else — someone whom He loves a lot and someone who is close to Him because of his/her good deeds. Let me give you an example to help us understand us. Let's say you want to ask your dad for something, but you are scared he might say no. So, what might you do? You might ask your mom to ask her because he is more likely to say yes to her.

Similarly, when we ask Allah for something by asking through the Ahlul Bayt (A), because He loves them so much, He is more likely to give us what we want quicker! So, our second responsibility during this time is do to tawassul to Allah through Imam az-Zaman (AJ).

Our third responsibility during the ghaybah is to give sadaqah on behalf of our Imam (AJ). You see, boys and girls, one of the benefits or results of giving sadaqa is that it keeps away balaa — calamities or bad things — from happening. So, when we give sadaqa on behalf of our Imam (AJ), it helps protect our Imam (AJ) and keep away balaa from him. The fourth responsibility towards our Imam (AJ) is performing Ziyaarah on his behalf. If we are blessed with the opportunity to visit the shrines of one of the Imams (A), we can recite a special Ziyaarah on behalf of Imam az-Zaman (AJ). After all, we are visiting his parents/grandparents. Similarly, if you are blessed to perform Hajj or Umrah, you should perform an extra mustahab tawaaf on behalf of Imam az-Zaman (AJ). These are like small gifts that we can give to our Imam (AJ).

The fifth responsibility we have towards Imam Mahdi (AJ) in his dhuhoor is to remember him at all times. As I mentioned earlier, we should try to remember him first thing in the morning, but we should also remember him throughout the day. Remember him after your Salaah. Remember him when you're working hard in school, that you're gaining knowledge so you can be his follower. Remember him when you're going through a hard time, and ask him for help. Remember him when you're about to make a choice and ask yourself, "Am I about to do something that will make my Imam (AJ) happy or sad?"

The sixth and most important responsibility we have towards the Imam (AJ) is to prepare ourselves so that we are ready. When the Imam (AJ) returns, he needs believers who are strong in their faith, perfect in their practice, with sharp minds and deep levels of Taqwa — believers who have the best character and treat others in the best way possible.

When we make good choices about observing the rules of Islam, staying away from Haraam and doing the what's Wajib, then we are helping the dhuhoor to come quicker.

We pray that Allah (SWT) gives us all the tawfeeq to make good choices that will please Him and our Imam (AJ), and that will help our Imam (AJ) come back to us sooner. And we pray to Allah to help us recognize and support our Imam (AJ), unlike those who turned their backs on Imam Husain (A).

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Take your hearts with me on a journey to the land of Karbala. It is the 10th of Muharram, the day of Ashura. Since early morning, a battle has been raging on the sands of Karbala. One by one, Imam Husain's (A) companions face the enemy: some young, some old, some on horse, some on foot; but all were to meet the same fate —killed, in the way of Allah, in the service of their Imam (A).

From the moment the enemy releases the first arrow and begins the attack, Imam Husain's (A) companions refuse to let any members of his family fight. For as long as there is strength in their bones to protect them, not a single drop of the Prophet's blood will be shed. Men continue to leave, and bodies continue to return, until Imam Husain (A) can no longer count the number of farewells…until finally, none of those brave souls remain.

And yet, the enemy continues to advance. The members of Imam Husain's (A) family begin to prepare for battle. Imam Husain (A) watches as brothers, nephews, and sons enter the fight, refusing to allow him to enter before them; he watches as they are killed evilly on the hot desert sands, never to return.

Sayyidah Zaynab, the sister of Imam Husain, has been watching the events of the day with eyes that continue to grow older. She has seen so much sadness, that for every body she has seen brought back to the camp, she has seen a new strand of hair turn gray. For every cry she has heard, she has felt a new piece of her heart break.

For a moment, she looks towards where the bodies of her murdered sons lay. Aun and Muhammad, who had just come to ask her permission to allow them to enter the battle to defend their uncle. To defend the cause of Islam. They were so young, and the enemy was so thirsty for their blood – but she knew and they knew that strength of warriors ran through their veins. They were the children of Ali and Hamza. They were the grandsons of Ja'far at-Tayyaar.

Nearby, Imam Husain (A) looks off into the distance, and hears someone walk up behind him. It is his young nephew, Hadhrat Qasim. Imam Husain (A) turns towards him and finds a question in his eyes. Hadhrat Qasim begins, "Uncle, I have come to ask your permission to enter the battle."

Imam Husain (A) lovingly gazes at his nephew, who is the spitting image of his brother, Imam Hasan (A). How can he let this young boy who is only a young teenager, face such a bloodthirsty enemy?

Imam Husain (A) refuses to give his permission, but Hadhrat Qasim insists. He asks him again, kissing his hands. "Please Uncle, let me go, let me defend you, let me defend Islam. My heart will not rest until I have fought to protect the message of Truth!"

He is begging so sincerely that finally, Imam Husain (A) can no longer deny his request. He looks at Hadhrat Qasim's face and kisses him as he says, "Go, my dearest child, I give you my permission."

When we are young, it seems as if our whole life is stretched out before us. We still have to grow up, become adults, go to university, get married, and have kids of our own. When it comes to religion, it seems like we have all the time in the world. We're only five, ten, twelve, fourteen years old…when we get older, we'll learn more about Islam. When we get older, we'll start to pray, or read the Quran, or learn about the Prophet, or think about our responsibilities to the Imam of our time. Right now, we are young, how can anyone expect us to be the representatives of Islam? Right now, all we have to do is go to school and worry about the latest style or if we have the newest phone or video game. Right now, all that matters is being young and enjoying life to its fullest. Or is it?

When we look back to Karbala, we see there is a young boy named Hadhrat Qasim, who comes to his uncle, begging for the chance to be brave; to show the enemy that even with swords and spears, they can't take away his spirit, the true essence of who he is. There are his cousins, Aun and Muhammad, who are also close to him in age, yet also come to ask their uncle the same question. Youth, who are talented, intelligent, and beautiful. Who have years ahead of them that could be filled with money and power if that's what they truly wanted. If they didn't want to, they didn't have to fight. They could have worried about what the enemy would - not just say, but do - to them, if they took a stand and entered that battlefield. They could have been nervous that they would stand out – not just to a group of their friends, but to an army of thousands; not just people who would ignore them, but who would look at them with angry eyes, laughing and cursing in their direction before cutting their bodies to pieces.

But to these youth, none of that matters.

To them, being young will never,ever stop them from remembering Allah or making good choices. They will practice modesty — not when they have lost their beauty, but when they are at its peak. They will give up their personal desires — not when death seems close, but when it still seems so far away. They will choose to love Allah, and work so that Allah loves them, not caring what anyone might say or think of them, as long as Allah is happy with them – and they will do it, no matter what their age may be.

Hadhrat Qasim, like his cousins before him, heads into battle, fighting bravely. The army surrounds and attacks him. Imagine the scene: the bones of a youth being cut through by charging men on horses. The blood of a youth being spilled across Karbala's sands. But still, the face of a warrior, a shining light in the darkness. A young boy, teaching the world and the centuries to come, what it means to be a servant of Allah.

Imagine, the yelling of the soldiers as they hit him. Feel in your bones, the strength it takes to fight back. To not run from the battlefield, no matter how much pain they want you to feel. Imagine how someone so young could have responded so bravely to their yells, "If you don't know me, I am the son of Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet; I am Qasim, from the family of Ali (A)!"

And imagine, a soldier coming forward and striking Hadhrat Qasim's head. Hadhrat Qasim falling to the ground with the cry, "O dear Uncle, come to my aid!" Imam Husain (A) enters the battlefield like a wild falcon, scattering the forces of the enemy. And, after the dust settles, Imam Husain (A) cradles Hadhrat Qasim to his chest, saying, "By God! It is difficult for your Uncle that he could not come to your aid when you called, or that he answered, but it could not help you!"

In death, Hadhrat Qasim smiles, and in his smile, Imam Husain (A) sees the boy of the night before, whose young face looked up at him in a tent full of men; the boy who knew that when the sun would rise, all would be killed; the boy who knew his youth would soon end, and still asked, "Uncle, am I, too, included in the list of martyrs?"

Hearing the passion in his question, Imam Husain (A) had responded, "O my dear son! How do you see death (in the way of Allah)?"

Hadhrat Qasim had smiled—the smile that rests even now on his bloodstained face —and responded, "It is sweeter than honey."

Speech #7: Shaytaan's Tricks

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلَى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn that Shaytaan uses tricks to get us to make bad deeds.
- Children will learn that Shaytaan tries to create enmity and hatred between us, but we should be careful, as this can have very detrimental effects.
- Children will learn to seek refuge with Allah against Shaytaan and his whispering.

Lecture Content:

Tonight, we are going to talk about a few things that lead people away from following the good deeds that we all try really hard to do. We will discuss some of the tricks that Shaytaan plays because he wants to lead us off the right path. This can be something as simple as what we want to study or become when we grow up. So, let's say you want to become a doctor or an engineer when you grow up. They are both jobs that can make very good money; but if we are doing this job for the money, you must remember that money can lead you to arrogance. Or maybe this job will keep you so busy that you don't have time for anything else, like going to the Masjid or spending time with your family. For some people, having more money can cause them to become stingy, which means they don't want to use their wealth to help others around them or even to pay their religious dues, like khums. This example is a very basic one, but it is very important that we realize that we don't want to get trapped. We want to make sure that our decisions do not lead us into bad habits.

Let us cover two specific things that Shaytaan may do to trick us and keep us from making right decisions. Shaytaan's only goal is to lead us astray, so we have to remember what we have discussed in the past speeches and remember why we want to make good choices. One way that Shaytaan tries to trick us is by causing us to have bad opinions about others. This causes us to treat some people as enemies, which turns into an even bigger problem in which our family and even our community ultimately get involved. It begins to break the brotherhood and sisterhood that should be created in the community.

Hatred that is based on silly reasons, like thinking bad of someone without any proof, causes people to fight for even the smallest of things. You, as children and young adults,have young hearts that tend to be really good at forgiving. This is a very good trait to have, and one that you should try to maintain. But one of Shaytaan's tricks is to get rid of this trait and replace it with hatred. Allah tells us this in the Quran. He says:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَن يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ

Shaytaan only wants to cause enmity and hatred between you... (5:91)

This hatred is also mentioned in the ahadith of the Ahlul Bayt (a), which tell us, "The root of all evil is having this hatred." You see, if we have this hatred, it leads to other bad traits, like jealousy, cutting off ties, and talking bad about one another. Another hadith says, "The cause of corruption is found in hatred towards others."

On the day of Ashura, when Imam Husain said, "Don't you know that I am the grandson of the Prophet (S)?" The enemies said, "Yes, we know you are." The Imam then asked, "Don't you know that I am the son of Sayyidah Fatimah (A)?" They said, "Yes." He kept asking them these types of questions so they would realize who he was. Finally, he asked them another question: "Why are you fighting me?" They replied, "Because we have enmity and hatred towards your father, Imam Ali (A)." So, you see, because they hated his father, they were okay with taking it out on Imam Husain (A), without truly understanding what their bad thoughts were causing them to do.

We can also see example of people's enmity towards Prophet Yusuf (S). We learn in the Quran that his brothers were jealous of him, so they made very bad decisions based on that hatred that was in their hearts. They threw him in a well!

One of the du'as of the Qur'an that appears in Surah Hashr is:

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

[O Allah] do not put any hatred towards our brothers and sisters in our hearts. (59:10)

This a good reminder for us. We have to be careful with our family — our mom and dad, our brothers and sisters, our cousins, as well as our fellow brothers and sisters in faith. We need to stay away from this hatred. We need to be careful with how we treat our friends and family members and avoid causing conflicts that might lead to people hating each other. Even if you fight or have an argument, it's okay to say sorry first. In fact we have hadith that says, "If you say sorry first, there is a better place for you in Jannah."

Imam as-Sajjad (A) has told us, "The right of your brother is that his hand is like your hand, his back is like your back, and your respect is like his pride. His strength is your strength."

Additionally, the Prophet (S) has said, "If two people are not happy with each or not talking to each for more than three days, it's as if they have lost their Islam."

So, you see, having peace amongst brothers and sisters is something very important in Islam. We have to continually work on ourselves, even if the other person made a mistake or did something wrong, we have to be forgiving. We have to remember that we cannot stay angry at others for a long period of time. In fact, Imam Ali (A) has said, "You have to be careful of these types of sins, because they cause us to become weaker and weaker. Sometimes, they may even cause our death to come closer." In other ahadith, we learn that if we give sadaqah, our life is lengthened, but sins like cutting off ties will actually reduce your life.

We want to live long and healthy lives so that we can gather as much thawab and blessings by doing good deeds. One of the ways of doing this is by keeping good ties with our family. We have many ahadith that remind us of this. I realize that sometimes we may have some family members who are not so easy to get along with; they may not be very religious or they may have made very bad choices in the past. You don't have to make them your best friends, but we want to keep the connections. For all you know, you may end up being that person who helps them see the best in Islam with your good deeds! You always want to make sure that you don't make them feel bad — everyone wants to change for the better. But also make sure that you do not stay around them so much that you begin making bad choices. You have to be the one who leaves when you need to and helps when you can. Basically, you should surround yourself with people who have good habits and make good choices, but when family and friends want to change for the better, you want to make sure you are there for them.

Imam as-Sadiq (A) has said that, "In Qiyamah, some people will come to the plains and the grounds, and they will have a very good place in Jannah. They will get lots and lots of blessings. People will be told that these people are the Mutabahi. They will ask, 'Who are these people?' and the answer will be given, 'These are people from this world who chose to be around people who reminded them of their Lord.'"

So, you see, you will even get a special place in Jannah just for making good friends — for finding people who do good, and want to support you to be good as well! Look for those types of people who will remind you of Allah and want to keep you safe from the evils of Shaytaan and his tricks.

Let me tell you a short story. There was a man named Dawud Sadaraqi. Dawud had a cousin who had stopped talking to him. His cousin wasn't very religious — he didn't even believe in the Imam — but it was important to him that he help his cousin see the right path with the Imam (A). So, one day he went to visit Imam as-Sadiq (A), but on his way,

he stopped to see his cousin and took a gift for him. You see, we have many ahadith that say gifts can make hearts grow closer. So, anyways, Dawud gave his cousin the gift and then continued to the Imam's (A) home. As soon as he reached the door, the Imam (A) greeted him with a huge smile and a big hug. The man was so stunned. He asked, "O my Imam (A) what has happened? Why have I received such a warm welcome?" The Imam (A) replied, "I am so happy because I saw in your record of deeds that you went to see your cousin and that you made a connection even after he had disconnected from you."

So, there are two very clear points we can take away from this story. One is that our Imam (A) showed us the benefits we can receive from keeping good ties with our relatives. Secondly, we learn that the Imams (A) also see our deeds. There is a hadith that says that Imam Mahdi (AJ) receives our record of deeds every Monday and Thursday. So, we should make sure that he is happy when he sees our deeds.

The last thing we need to remember is that Shaytaan does his best to make ugly things look pretty; this is another of his tricks we need to be aware of and avoid. You may hear certain whispers from Shaytaan like, "Oh, you are only going to be at the party for a little while;" or "It's not all haraam, so it's okay;" or "Music (the haram type) isn't really that bad;" and many more lies like that, where he makes things appear as they are not. Allah tells us in the Quran what to do in certain cases. He says:

وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّـهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

If Shaytaan tries to disturb you with a whisper, then ask Allah for protection (7:200)

And in another Surah, Allah tells us we can ask for protection by saying:

وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ

Say, 'My Lord! I seek Your protection from the whispers of Shaytaan (23:97)

Finally, we have to pay strong attention to what Allah (SWT) has asked us to do and understand that He has sent us the Quran, the Prophets, and our Imams to keep us safe and away from Shaytaan's evil ideas and whispers. As long as we remain careful in following the laws of Allah, inshaAllah it will be more difficult for Shaytaan to trick us.

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِى حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّى سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِىَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّى لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِىِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Tonight is the 7th night of Muharram, a very sad night. According to some narrations, water was cut off to the camp of Imam Husain (A) from the 7th of Muharram. Remember, these nights were very difficult for the Ahlul Bayt (A). Tonight, we want to remember the loss of a son. But this son was not just an ordinary son. Ali Akbar was somebody who was extremely special. We're told that when people used to long for the Prophet (S), when they would miss Rasulullah, they would look at Ali Akbar. Ali Akbar — who was an example of the Prophet (S) in his speech, in his character, and in his looks as well. This statement is very important. Allah tells us in the Quran that our Prophet had a very great character. He was Rahmatul lil 'alameen — a mercy to the worlds — and sirajan muneera — a bright

lantern to humanity. Ali Akbar had these same characteristics. He was somebody who was extremely good and pious. He was a light among the people. He was a great young man, and he was someone whom Imam Husain (A) loved very dearly.

You all know how much a parent loves their child. Most people live their lives, and their parents pass away before they do. But when a parent has to face the loss of a child before they do, this is something that is extremely difficult for a heart to take.

Let us take our hearts to this heartbreaking scene. It was the day of Ashura, and one by one, the companions of Imam Husain (A) give their lives, showing their bravery on the battlefield. Not a single one hesitated to serve the Imam of their time. But the companions were numbered. Finally it came to a point where there were no companions left. The Ahlul Bayt (A) saw these acts of bravery one after another, but now their time had come to give their lives. The first among them to say he wants to go to the battlefield is the son of Imam Husain (A). Ali Akbar asks his father for permission to go to the battlefield. We are told that Imam Husain (A) gives his son permission to go without any hesitation at all. But at the same time, as the father is watching his son turn away from him for maybe the last time, the eyes of our Imam (A) are filled with tears.

Why is our Imam crying? On one hand, he is content with the will of Allah. He knows that he must sacrifice his son, and that his son must be sacrificed in front of his own eyes; but on the other hand, he is a father. This is a scene of contentment with the will of Allah and compassion for very beloved son.

Ali Akbar is approaching the battlefield. Imam Husain (A) cries out, "O Allah! Bear witness that there is a young man who is going forth who most resembles your Prophet in his looks, characteristics, and speech. Whenever we would wish to look to our prophet, we would look to him!"

Ali Akbar is facing the enemy army. He cries out, "Ana Ali ibn Husain ibn Ali — I am Ali, the son of Husain, the son of Ali. We are, by Allah, more deserving to this right than anyone else. Do you not see how I protect my father?"
Ali Akbar is on his horse fighting the enemy army. It is one man against so many. Ali Akbar fights so bravely and so strongly. But after some time, there is a strange scene, one which has not been seen all day in karbala. The young man who is fighting suddenly begins returning back to his camp. Is he scared? Is he running away? God forbid that he would do such a thing! Is it that he is thirsty and tired? No! This is Ali Akbar. Brothers and sisters, if you had the chance to meet the Imam of your time before you died, wouldn't you do so? This is what Ali Akbar wishes to do. He comes to his father one last time and says, "O Father, the weight of this armor is so heavy! And my thirst is killing me. If only there was some way to get some water!" Imam Husain (A) looks at his son. Imagine what a father would say to his son who is so thirsty, but he has no water to give. He tells him "O my son, be patient! Soon, you will meet your grandfather, who will give you a drink after which you will never be thirsty!"

After hearing this, Ali Akbar is recharged. He returns to the battlefield and fights for some time. But there is one man named ibn Munqidh (la'natullah alay) who is determined to kill the son of Husain (A). He prepares his spear, waiting for the right moment. He wanted to go down in history for being the first killer of the family of the Ahlul Bayt (A) on the Day of Ashura. Alas, he throws his spear, and it hits Ali Akbar, who is thrown off his horse.

Ali Akbar cries out, Ya Abata! Alayka salam! — O my father, I send you my salam! I see my grandfather— (that promise of Imam Husain(A) has come true) — he has quenched my thirst and he is telling you hurry up and join us!"
Imam Husain (A) is watching this scene. He hears his son, but now there is a whole army who has gathered around the body of Ali Akbar. They know who this young man is. They see the Imam (A) standing there, but O enemies, don't you see that it is not just the Imam watching?! There is a lady who is also watching what is going on! Zaynab (SA) comes out and is watching what is happening to her nephew. O enemy, stop! Don't do that! How can you do this to this young man, who so resembled the Prophet (S) that you claim to follow! Zaynab cries out, "Ya habeebaah wabna akhaah! O my beloved one! O my nephew!"
Imam Husain (A) goes to the body of his son and put his cheek on the cheek of his son as he cries out, "O life! You are not worth living after this!"
La'anatullahi 'alaa qawm idh-dhaalimeen

Speech #8: Steadfastness

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلَى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn that one of the qualities in Imam Husain's (A) companions, especially Hadhrat Abbas, was steadfastness.
- Children will learn that we should try to become steadfast by seeking Allah's help and remaining firm in following His commands and the Imams.

Lecture Content:

One of the many people we remember during the month of Muharram is Hadhrat Abbas. In this speech, we will talk a little about how important of man he was, and later, we will talk about one of his great qualities. Hadhrat Abbas was Imam Husain's (A) half brother. His father was Imam Ali (A), and his mother was Ummul Baneen. She was known as a very respectable woman, who was very good and respectful to Sayyidah Fatimah (A), who had passed away. Her family was known to be a very courageous family, and she had three other boys in addition to Hadhrat Abbas.

We have a hadith from Imam as-Sajjad that says, "Indeed, the status of Abbas will be so high compared to all the shuhadaah that people will just be in an awe of him." Hadhrat Abbas was the one who Imam Husain (A) had sent to the enemies to ask for one more day, as they wanted to spend the night in prayer and in remembrance of Allah (SWT). When he asked him to do this, he said, "O my brother, bi nafsee, may I be sacrificed for you! Please, you must go do this."

When someone says this — bi nafsee — it means "You may have everything that I own - it's yours." So, when Imam Husain (A) said this, we know that it is a very big deal because it is coming from our Imam (A).

Additionally, a man said that he heard Imam as-Sadiq (A) say this when he had visited the grave of Imam Husain (A). As Imam as-Sadiq (A) stood before the grave of Hadhrat Abbas, he threw himself on the grave and said, "I bear witness and I know and I testify that you are someone who surrendered to the will of Allah, someone who was truthful and honest, someone who wanted all the goodness for the grandson of the Prophet (S)."

It has also been narrated from Imam Mahdi (A), the Imam of our time, that he would say salam and that he would also say, "My salams and peace be upon Abul Fadhl Abbas, the son of Amir ul-Mo'mineen, the one who sacrificed his life for Imam Husain (A), so he could help save the future of Islam. He was the one who sacrificed himself and was like a shield for the Imam of his time."

So, you see, it's great when we get praised for the good that we do, but we also have to remember that the one who's praising is also very important. Being praised by the Imams is a great indicator as to what kind of a person Hadhrat Abbas was. This lets us know how very special he is to us!

This brings us to understanding the great characteristics that Hadhrat Abbas had. In fact, many of the companions of Imam Husain (A) had these great characteristics. However, one that was very evident in Hadhrat Abbas was his steadfastness. The dictionary defines steadfastness as, "firm in purpose, resolution, faith, and adherence." In other words, someone who is dedicated to reaching their goal or purpose.

We must understand that steadfastness comes from a person who has a strong understanding of his faith. A steadfast person is someone who practices and struggles, and is always doing what will make Allah (SWT) happy. We should always make du'a that Allah (SWT) give us this quality of steadfastness. You see, many people who are very religious and very good people may not always be able to stay on task, or they may slip up from time to time. This is because

they don't have this characteristic of steadfastness.

During the time of the Prophet (S), there was a man named Ubaidullah Abu Jafar. He became Muslim in Mecca and then went all the way to a country named Abyssinia, in Africa, to be protected from all the non-muslims who were hurting the Muslims. When he reached Abyssinia, he saw people performing many different types of sins, and sadly, because he had not held steadfast to his religion, he began making very bad choices, slipping into doing evil things, and eventually became a person who was known to be a sinner.

There was another person who was known for reciting beautiful poetry about Imam Ali (A) and the event of Eid al-Ghadeer, but since his faith was not steadfast, he began to make very bad choices. Pretty soon, he began reciting poems against our Imam, because he became friends with the evil rulers of that time. So, you see, because he was not steadfast, his bad choices led him to the wrong side!

There is an ayah in the Quran that states:

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّـهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

Allah keeps firm those who believe with the firm word, in this world and in the Hereafter. (14:27)

So, you see, if we try our best to stick to the message of Islam and follow the truth — that is, remain steadfast in our religion — then Allah will help us remain firm.

Additionally, in Surah Anfal, Allah says:

...إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ

[Remember] when your Lord inspired the angels, "I am with you, so strengthen those who believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved..." (8:12)

Here, Allah (SWT) helps us understand that He is always there for us, and that He even sends the angels to support us. However, He will put fear in the hearts of the non-believers; therefore, if we are steadfast and rely on Allah (SWT), we will always have His support and that of the angels.

Therefore, we have to always look at our choices. Yes, at times, this can be very hard. We live in a time and place where many people who surround us are not practicing Islam, and we live amongst people who may not always have the best lifestyles. Still, we have to stay steadfast to overcome those choices. With the support of Allah (SWT) and help that he gives us through various channels including the angels, we can bring about good change, and you may be a person who helps those who don't do good deeds or follow the religion of Allah (SWT) come to make new choices. InshaAllah, with Allah's mercy, they may come to understand the religion of Islam — all because of your good choices and steadfastness.

We have another beautiful du'a in the Quran from Surah al-Baqarah:

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

O our Lord, make us steadfast and plant our feet so that we are successful against the disbelieving people. (2:250)

Allah (SWT) describes the people who are steadfast very beautifully in the Quran. He mentions that they are like trees who are rooted in their faith and that they keep true to what gets them closer to Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) further describes that a believer can be known by the way they walk, the way they talk, and how they live. Basically, everything about them reminds people about Allah (SWT).

Like we mentioned earlier, this isn't always easy, but Allah is always there helping us. He reminds us that if we take one step towards him, He will take ten steps towards us. We have to believe that He will help us. We have to pray that our steadfastness will allow us to be like the people on the Day of Judgment who will pass through the bridge of Siraat so quickly that it is they won't even realize how quickly they got there!
Lasltly, Imam as-Sadiq says that, "There are two paths: the path in this world and the path in the next world. The path in the world is that we follow and obey the Imams (A) and completely surrender to the rules and guidelines provided by them."

We have to remember that the Imams were appointed by Allah (SWT). During the time of Imam as-Sadiq (A), there was a man by the name of Kulayb who would always ask and do as the Imam would say, and he was given the name Kulayb "Tasleem" - the one who surrenders to the command of the Imam. When, his companions came to tell Imam as-Sadiq (A) about him, the Imam (a) said, "He is someone who believes and does good deeds. He is mukhbat." This word — mukhbat — means a believer who is at a very high status and whose heart is filled with love of Allah and obedience and humility towards Him

We have so many examples of people who are steadfast. The Quran mentions pious ladies, like Hadhrat Maryam, who was steadfast with the people, and Hadhrat Asiya, who was the pious and patient wife of the Pharaoh. Allah states that Hadhrat Asiya used to pray, "O my Lord, please make me strong and steadfast against the Pharoah, and please provide me a home close to You in Jannah."

In the event of Karbala, we also have another companion who was also very steadfast and was the shield for our Imam Husain (A). His name was Sa'eed bin Abdullah al-Hanafi. Everywhere the Imam went, he was there. One of the times when he was shielding the Imam, the arrows were so many that he was dying, The Imam (A) came to him, and the man did not say, "Oh, I am in pain." No. He said, "O, the son of Rasulullah, did I do my duty to you? Was I loyal?" Even on the day of Ashura, the companions of the Imam (A) remained steadfast, and we especially see this in Hadhrat Abbas. At the time that he was the most thirsty and he had water in his hand, he was steadfast and said, "How can I drink water, when my Imam is thirsty?" Thus, being steadfast is something that we have to develop overtime. We have to be good friends and help each other. We need to encourage each other to always make the right decision! And most importantly, we need to keep praying to Allah for to help us become steadfast, inshaAllah.

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِى حَلَّتْ بِفِنَايِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّى سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِىَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّى لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

On the day of Ashura, Yazeed's army loads buckets of water for their animals from the river, spilling and sloshing them across the desert sands. Precious drops that seep into the ground are followed by the eyes of thirsty children whose lips are cracked from the blazing desert heat. The enemy has long since blocked Imam Husain's (A) access to water. Soldiers line up in front of the Euphrates River, their swords out, prepared to kill anyone who thinks about bringing water to the family of the Prophet.

Imam Husain's young daughter watches the riverbank with the other children. Why do the soldiers stand so close to the river? After they water their horses, are they going to bring the children something to drink?
Imam Husain's brother, Hadhrat Abbas, witnesses her thirsty eyes. The lion's spirit in him rears its head, roaring in anger at the pain on her face. This young girl, these children, are the light of his heart. They are more precious to him than life itself, and he can't bear to see their thirst.

A soldier from the riverbank calls out, "O Husain! Do you see this water flowing similar to the heavens? By Allah! You shall not get a drop from it until you, along with your companions, die of thirst."

Hadhrat Abbas turns to face his brother. How much grief has he seen today? How many bodies have returned to this camp, covered in wounds? But despite all this, how firm his back still stands. How firm is his faith that in the face of such hardship, he finds patience with Allah (swt). To choose death with dignity, rather than a life of humiliation.
Hadhrat Abbas approaches his brother and asks him, "O Brother, can I please have permission to go to the battlefield?"
Imam Husain replies, "O Abbas! You are my flagbearer. If you leave, my army will become scattered!"

Hadhrat Abbas exclaims, "My chest is restless, and I have had enough of this life! I want to avenge the blood of my brothers from these hypocrites!"

Imam Husain (A) says, "O Abbas, why don't you get some water for these children?"

Hadhrat Abbas, known as the Saqqaa' – the water carrier – gets a water-skin and mounts his horse, riding furiously towards the Euphrates River. 4,000 men encircle him with a shower of arrows, but Hadhrat Abbas is persistent.

His sword flashes as angrily as the glint in his eye until finally, he makes it to the riverbank. He fills the water-skin and rests it on his right shoulder. He turns to ride back to the tents, but is surrounded by the enemy.

Suddenly, a man ambushes Hadhrat Abbas and cuts off his right arm. Ignoring the pain, Hadhrat Abbas switches the water-skin to his left arm. Again, the man strikes, severing his left arm. Hadhrat Abbas has lost both hands!

"But how can I return to the tents empty-handed?", he must have been thinking. "How can I look upon the faces of those sweet children and have nothing to offer them? I must go on." He is a warrior, and the children are his heart, and he will stop at nothing until their thirst is quenched.

Hadhrat Abbas holds the water-skin with his teeth, but the cruelty of the enemy knows no bounds. An arrow strikes his mouth, piercing the water-skin with it, and water and blood stream together into the weeping sands.

The water drains from the water-bag, and the hopes of the thirsty children drain with it. Suddenly, an arrow is shot straight into his chest.

A tragic cry rings through the skies of Karbala, "O brother! Find me!"

Imam Husain (A) races towards Hadhrat Abbas' voice, and sees a flag fallen on the desert sands, drenched in the blood of his flag-bearer. He rushes toward it and falls to his knees next to the broken body of his brother. Laying Hadhrat Abbas' head in his lap, Imam Husain wipes the blood from his brow. Hadhrat Abbas' breath catches, and with it, Imam Husain's does as well. The Imam (A) is so close to his brother that the arrow that is planted in Hadhrat Abbas' chest has also pierced a hole in Imam Husain's heart.

Seeing Hadhrat Abbas' tears, Imam Husain asks him, "O brother, why are you crying?" Hadhrat Abbas replies, "Why shouldn't I cry, O brother, O light of my eyes?" In a few moments, Hadhrat Abbas takes his final breath, and the silence is like an arrow that shoots through Imam Husain's spine. He exclaims to the heavens, "O Abbas! O my brother!"
When he returns to the camp, we can imagine that his young daughter Sakina comes toward him and asks about her uncle. Imam Husain (A) replies with the news of his death, and his sister Zaynab calls out, "O brother! O Abbas!" The

women of the camp begin to weep for the loss of their lion, their alamdar, their warrior, their prince…the moon of Bani Hashim. The one who fought bravely, the one who died thirsty in a struggle to bring water to the children. The one whose faith was firm in the message of Islam. The one whose loyalty remains unmatched. The one who showed what it means to faithful to the Imam of our time. The one in whose life and death there can be found nothing but servitude to Allah (swt).

Imam Husain thinks of the beautiful face of his brother: the smile that has been his childhood, adolescence, adulthood; the mind which has understood the secrets of his heart; the man who has been the reflection of his thoughts, the vigor in his actions, the other half of his very soul. In Imam Husain's (A) mind will replay that moment, from now until his last breath; when he came across the broken, bloodied body of his brother; when he leaned over him for the last time – his voice, a hollow cry: "Now my back has been broken…"

Speech #9: Imam Husain (A) and the Quran

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلَى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn about the importance of the Quran.
- Children will learn that we should take the Quran as a guide in our daily lives.

Lecture Content:

Tonight is the 9th night of the month of Muharram. Tomorrow is the ninth day of the month, when Imam Husain (A) asked for one more night. He wanted this night to offer Salaah, make Du'a, ask forgiveness, and to recite Quran. On that night, the Imam (A) and everyone around him spent their last night gathering as much thawaab and reward as they could. They say that when someone would go near their tents, they could hear the sound of munajaat (whispering) and du'a to Allah, and it sounded like bees buzzing near a hive. Tomorrow night, we'll insha'Allah talk about Salaah and tonight, we'll talk about Imam Husain (A) and his connection with the Quran.

We know that there is a Quran which we read in the form a book, a written Quran. We also know that the Imams are the living Quran. They interpret, explain, and live according to the Quran. The Quran is a guidebook for us. It's not to use just for weddings or when someone dies; it's a book we need to use regularly to help guide us. We have the famous Hadith of Thaqalayn where the Prophet (S) said:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ مَا إِنْ
تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَ
عِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي وَ إِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا
حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ

I leave behind the two things of value with you. If you cling to them you will never go wrong: the Quran and my family. They will never be separated until they come to me at the pond of Kauthar (in Jannah).

In many ways, the Quran has characteristics similar to the Imams. The Quran is هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقِين (hudan lil muttaqeen) — it is a guide for those who are pious. The Imams are misbah al hudah – lanterns of guidance. Also, both the Quran and Imams are always alive. The Quran is a living text that hasn't been changed and won't be changed until the Day of Judgment. Similarly, today, the Imam of our time is alive and guides us, even though we can't see him. You can also see that today the Quran is alive amongst us and even Imam Husain (A) is alive and with us through his remembrance and sacrifice.

Another characteristic of the Quran is that no matter how much you read it and understand it, you never get tired of learning from it. It's the same with our Imams. The companions would sit around them learning, taking so much pleasure in being in their company.

Now, let's look at the relationship Imam Husain (A) had with the Quran. We can see that all throughout his journey to Karbala that he was speaking the Quran and using the Quran. You know, we can do that in our lives, too. If someone asks you how are you doing, you can say "Alhamdulillahi rabbil alameen." Which ayah did we just recite? The 2nd ayah of Surah al-Fatiha. The Quran is living, and we can use it as a daily guide.

In the Ziyarah of Imam Husain (A), we read:
We bear witness that you used to read the Quran in your life and you used to live with it.

On the night of Ashura, he said, "I love Salaah and I love reading Allah's book."

In one of his other Ziyaarah, we say, "Salam and peace be on the one who is partnered with the Quran."

Even in his daily life, when people would ask him questions or make comments, Imam Husain (A) would use the Quran to help explain things to people.

One day, when Imam Husain (A) was walking past the masjid, he saw Abdullah bin Umar bin Aas. This man had fought against Imam Ali (A) in the battle of Siffeen. He looked at Imam Husain (A) and said, "Dear friends, anyone who wants to see the light in the skies and the heavens, look at the face of this Imam."

Another man, Abu Saeed, who was sitting by him, asked him, "If you believe that, why did you fight against his father, Imam Ali (A), in the battle of Siffeen?"

He replied, "It's not my fault. The Quran tells us وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا - and be good to your parents (17:23). So, I listened to my father who ordered me to fight against Ali."

Abu Saeed grabbed his hand and took him to Imam Husain (A) and said, "O the grandson of Rasulullah, this is what this man said."

Imam Husain (A) then replied with verse 15 of Surah Luqman:

وَإِن جَـٰهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰٓ أَن تُشْرِكَ بِى مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا

But if they urge you to ascribe to Me as partner that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them. (31:15)

If your mother and father command you to do something that is against the will of Allah, this is shirk and do not accept it. We can obey our parents only as long as what they say doesn't go against Islam.

So you see, it's so important for our connection to the Quran to be through someone who can understand the Quran. here are things we can do to learn the correct understanding of the Quran. We can read books from qualified scholars, attend their lectures or watch them on websites like ShiaTV and YouTube, or we can look at the commentary of the Quran of scholars like Allamah Tabatabai.

Then, in the story, Imam Husain (A) continued by quoting a tradition from Rasulullah (S), "There is no obedience towards the creations of Allah in something that is going to be a sin towards the Creator, Allah." This is very important. When you're with good, trustable friends, it's good to keep company with them only when it doesn't cross the line with Allah (SWT).

This is how Imam Husain (A) would use the Quran to explain to people the rules of Allah and Islam.

The second way Imam Husain (A) was connected through the Quran is visible all throughout the journey through Karbala. Imam Husain (A) would be reading the Quran and doing Tafsir of the Quran. When Imam Husain (A) left Madina on the 28th of Rajab, about 4 months before Muharram, he went to the grave of the Prophet in Madina to say goodbye. There, he recited this verse:

فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ ۖ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

So he left the city, fearful and alert. He said, "My Lord! Deliver me from the wrongdoing lot." (28:21)

This verse is about Prophet Musa and Pharoah. When Prophet Musa left Egypt to get away from the Pharoah at night, he made this du'a. He said, "رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ - O my Lord, save me from this group of people that is so oppressive."

We see that in every aspect, if we get closer to the Quran, we can get a better idea of how to connect with the Quran. But one of the rules is that you can't just take one ayah and understand it. The Quran is a book, but it's not written like a typical book, with a beginning, middle, and ending. You have to read many different ayaat to understand that one ayah properly. For example, if I tell you that the elephant's nose is big, you might think that the whole elephant is big. You won't know that his tail is very small, until you hear about that exception.

When Imam Husain (A) reached Mecca, he recited another verse from the Quran:

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

And when he turned his face toward Midian, he said, "Maybe my Lord will show me the right way." (28:22)

Prophet Musa (A) had said this when he reached the city of Midian and felt peaceful. Similarly, this is when Imam Husain (A) also felt peace.
On the day of Ashura, Imam Husain (A) read several ayahs. When he came to Imam as-Sajjad, he recited the following ayah:

اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّـهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

Shaytaan has taken over these people and made them forget the remembrance of Allah. Those are the people of Shaytaan. Without a doubt, the people of Shaytaan will be the losers. (58:19)

By reciting this ayah, he was reminding everyone not to forget Allah because forgetting Allah will give Shaytaan the opportunity to influence us.

Another place the Imam (A) used the Quran was when his son, Ali Akbar, came to ask his permission to fight, and he gave permission right away. When other companions would come to him, he would hesitate, but with Ali Akbar, Imam Husain (A) gave permission without thinking twice. He looked away and recited this ayah:

إِنَّ اللَّـهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

Surely, Allah has chosen Adam and Nuh and the family of Ibrahim and the family of Imran over [everyone else] in the world [to be leaders]. (3:33)

This ayah gave him peace:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّـهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Surely, In the remembrance of Allah, the hearts find peace. (13:28)

Even after his death, when the enemies put the heads on spears, Imam Husain (A) spoke and read the Quran. And this is not something strange. We see that even in the cradle, Prophet Isa (A) spoke. Prophet Yahya (A) also spoke after he died. There are so many different stories that show that people spoke in what we think are strange situations. The ayah of the Quran says:

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ أَمْوَاتًا ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ

Don't think that those people who have died in the path of Allah are dead. No, they are alive with Allah. (3:169)

One of the ayahs that Imam Husain (A) recited after his shahada was from Surah ash-Shu'ara, Verse 227. It states:

وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنقَلَبٍ يَنقَلِبُونَ

The wrongdoers will soon know at what goal they will end up. (26:227)

This ayah is a reminder about the oppression that has been done in this world and that Allah will take revenge on the Day of Qiyamah.

There's a narration from one of our scholars in which Zayd ibn Arqam says, "I was sitting in my room when the caravan passed by with the heads on the spears and Imam Husain (A) from the spear was reciting Surah Kahf, Verse 9 – 'Do you suppose that the Companions of the Cave and the Inscription were among Our strange and wonderful signs?'"

This ayah wasn't randomly chosen to be recited by Imam Husain (A). He chose this ayah because he wanted to show that the people of the cave were strong, young people who wanted to defend their faith and stand up against oppression. He wanted to show that these companions that he fought with were like these people of the cave. And that the fact that the head of the grandson of the Prophet (s) is being paraded on the streets is even stranger than the people of the cave falling asleep for hundreds of years.

So, you see, one of the things Imam Husain (A) is teaching us is not just to read the Quran, but to live with the Quran. Spend a little time to read some Quran every day. Read some of the ayahs and reflect on them. If there's one book we should be trying to understand truly, it's this book, because it's our guide and our map to Jannah. When we read this Quran, it's a way of Allah talking to us.

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

The hot rays of the sun pound down on blood-drenched sands, filled with nothing but silence.

Every friend, brother, nephew, and son has been killed. Their bodies lie across the desert plains, and each glance at them is a twisting arrow's pain in Imam Husain's (A) heart. The battle still echoes in Imam Husain's (A) ears: every call for justice, every cry for help, every last salaam.

Today, Imam Husain (A) has been witness to many final breaths. Today, he has wept for many companions. Today, he

has seen many fallen soldiers brought back to the tents. Today, he can still feel the weight of the bodies he carried back in his arms.

Imam Husain's (A) tongue may be thirsty, but his heart is caught in an ocean of sadness. There is no one left but him. No one to protect his women, no one to run a loving hand over the heads of his children. After his death, they will be left alone in this land of tears and blood.

In a final cry for help, a final effort to awaken a conscience in a sleeping enemy, Imam Husain (A) calls out, "Is there anyone who will defend the family of the Prophet of Allah?"

His voice echoes, unanswered, through the empty air. Silence.

Hearing his call, the women in the camp begin to weep. Imam Husain (A) comes to the door of the tent and asks to hold his son, Ali Asghar. "Give me my infant child so that I may bid him farewell…"

Imam Husain (A) holds his baby in his arms, cradling the deepest part of his heart, the most beloved light of his eyes. There is a pain in him that will not stop as he sees the pain of Ali Asghar's thirst, the paleness of his face, his dry tongue running over and over his lips.

Imam Husain (A) calls out to the enemy, "O people! If you do not feel sorry for me, at least feel sorry this child!" When they see this baby crying, how do their eyes remain dry? When they see his tongue is dry, how do theirs remain wet? Won't they give his son a few drops to drink?

In what society, in what time, is the cry of a child threatening to an enemy? Why do the commanders of the army stand in fear, becoming nervous as they watch their soldiers shift, perhaps for the first time today, hesitating to act? What is it in the chapped lips of Ali Asghar that scares grown men; what is it in the gentleness of his face that threatens to defeat their cause with a single glance?

He cannot stand in the battlefield to defend his father. But with the innocence of his cries, he seems to rush forward, his tears like arrows striking the hearts of the enemy. Ali Asghar could not speak, but with his tears, he put fear into the heart of the enemy; he showed them that even as an infant, they did not scare him; even as a child, they could not defeat him.

Ali Asghar knows he will not be there to see what happens to his mother and sisters and aunts after him. He knows he cannot tell them goodbye. Instead he looks towards them and smiles for the last time.
The neck of a baby is what a father would bend down to kiss. But Ali Asghar's neck is not greeted by loving lips. Instead, an arrow fulfills this kiss. Shot from the bow of a cruel man named Harmala, the arrow pierces itself deep into his neck.

Imam Husain (A) cries out, and the skies thunder in anger. The blood of this sweet child gathers in Imam Husain's (A) hands, and the air which was just filled with Ali Asghar's cries becomes silent. The father casts the blood of his son into the sky as Ali Asghar's small body no longer moves.

Using his sword, Imam Husain (A) digs a small grave for his son. The heart cannot stay inside its chest when it imagines how small this grave must be! How little does a father have to dig to bury the tiny body of his son? How many tears must fall as he lays his sweet Ali Asghar to sleep forever? How must his mother be weeping in pain, calling out to her baby son, I could not quench your thirst my dear Ali Asghar. Instead, an arrow quenched it with your blood. Innalillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'oon.

Speech #10: Salaah

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِله-ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Lecture Objectives:

- Children will learn about the importance of Salaah, and how Imam Husain (A) prioritized his Salaah on the day of Ashura.
- Children will learn that we should make it a priority to pray on time, as this keeps us away from wrongdoing and sins.

Lecture Content:

This night, the night of Ashura, is a very important night. On this night, all of the companions knew that the very next day, they would be giving their lives for Allah and for the Imam. So, as night fel, what they did on that night is actually a very good lesson for us to learn. They made that night — their last night in this world — a night of worship and remembrance of Allah. They knew that we were put in this world and given so many gifts from Allah so that we can love Him and worship Him, and they decided to spend these last precious moments of their lives remembering Allah. .

Let me tell you a short parable, a story, that will teach us a lesson. One day, an army was walking through the desert at night. When they got there, they were very tired, but their commander told them to get bags and start filling them up with rocks. Everyone was very confused. They all respected this leader and thought he was very wise, but they just did not understand. They ended up splitting into three groups.

The first group thought, "This guy is out of his mind! We're going to sleep! Why does he want us to pick up rocks?!" They didn't pick up any rocks, and went to sleep.

The second group thought, "Okay he said we have to do it, so let's get a few rocks and then go to sleep." So, they picked a few rocks and went to sleep.

The third group knew that their leader is wise, so he must be saying this out of his wisdom. They picked up as many rocks as they could and then went to sleep.

The next morning, when they woke up, they saw that the land was filled with diamonds, gold, and jewels. But now that it was daylight, they couldn't gather anything. The first group that didn't pick up anything was so upset that they missed this opportunity. The second group was upset and wished they had picked up more. And the third group, even though they had picked up more than any other group, was also upset that they slept at all – they should have used the whole night to pick up rocks!'

So, you see, this world is limited. We have only so much time to get closer to Allah by serving Him. Which group would you want to be like? That evening, the companions of Imam Husain (A) were like this third group. They requested one more night to worship Allah. They were supposed to fight on the 9th of Muharram, but Imam Husain (A) sent Hadhrat Abbas to request one more night. One more night to do what? He said, "I want to spend this night offering Salaah, making Dua, reading Quran, and seeking His forgiveness."

On the night of Ashura, people often stay at their centers late into the night. This one night has the potential of giving the reward of 70 years of worship, so spend it in a good way. If you're with your friends, talk about the lessons you've learned these nights. If you see people doing azadari, or listening to a speech, or talking about Imam Husain (A), join them with a sad heart, cry,and learn from it. This night is worth a lot, so pray to Allah that He helps change our hearts and that He makes us those people that Allah, the Prophet (S), and Imams (A) would be proud of.

They say that tonight, when people went towards the tents, it sounded as though there were bees around a hive. You could hear the sounds of prayers and munajaat and talking to Allah (SWT). In this speech, let us reflect on the akhlaq and lessons Imam Husain (A) taught us. There is an ayah in the Holy Quran that says:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ

Surely, we have sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and We have sent them the Book and the Balance, so that they can provide justice in this world. (57:25)

So, you can see that the Prophets came with books, not with force.

We also have a beautiful ayah in Surah at-Tawba, Verse 111 that Allah buys from the mu'mineen, themselves. SubhaanAllah! He created us, and now He wants to "buy" us, meaning that if we dedicate our lives to serving Him through our good deeds and staying away from bad deeds, He will gives us the best of rewards. It's like when a mom or dad gives a kid money to open up a store and guess who's the first customer? The parent themselves. The parent is the one who gave all the money in the first place! So, over here, Allah is the one who buys our good actions, and He rewards us with Jannah. But who are these mu'mineen? We see in Ayah 112, Allah explains nine characteristics of these mu'mineen: (1) they are the ones who do tawbah – they return to Allah when they make a mistake. (2) They do ruku and (3) they do sujood. This doesn't mean they're always in ruku or sujood, but they are always in the remembrance of Allah, (4) and they pay attention to their prayers. (5) They do 'amr bil ma'roof and (6) nahy 'anil munkar – they invite towards goodness and stop from badness; (7) they're good friends to each other (8) and help each other. (9) They're careful not to cross the lines that Allah has made for us – Allah created us and knows that these boundaries are good for us, and we have to believe that from the bottom of our hearts.

What's important is not only to have these 9 characteristics, but to have them with deep understanding and know what our responsibilities are. Some people in the time of the Prophet (S) would leave their responsibilities to their families and would go into caves and just pray all day. When the Prophet (S) found out, he got very upset he said, "Don't you see me with my family? Don't you see that I eat food? I spend time with people; I don't just sit in a room and pray."

There has to be a balance, and everything has to be for Allah. And you can do that. You can drink milk, so you can be healthy, so you can study, so you can serve Allah in the future. Drinking milk becomes a form of worship, one that you will get rewarded for. Our time is limited. If you study math, make an intention that you're doing so to get into a good college / university so you can serve Allah and His community. When you wash the dishes or help your mom pick up the table, make an intention that you're doing it to make your parents happy, and then it becomes worship for which you get reward.

There's a beautiful story about a companion who lived during the time of the Prophet (S) , but he never got a chance to see or meet him. He was also alive during the time of Imam Ali (A), and his name was Uwais al-Qarani. Uwais al-Qarani was a man who lived in a city a little bit away from Medina with his old mother. When he became Muslim, he really wanted to see the Prophet (S), but his mother was old, and his responsibilities were towards her.

One day, he asked his mother, "Mother, can I please go and visit the Prophet (S) in Medina?" His mother said, "Okay, but be back before Maghrib, before it gets dark." So, he went, excited to see the Prophet. When he got to Medina, he asked around where the Prophet is. The people said, "Oh Owais, he went out of town, and he will be back later." So Owais waited and waited, but it started to get close to maghrib and he had to leave. He was so close to seeing the Prophet (S), but he had made a promise to his mother and had to get back before Maghrib. He returned home without seeing the prophet.

When he returned, the Prophet smelled the air, and said, "I smell the fragrance of Jannah. My dear friend Uwais was here!"

So, you can see that Islam is about doing your responsibilities in a balanced way. We can't just read Quran or offer Salaah all day. Imagine if all your actions had a light. This light should be a Godly light that makes everything you do an action for Allah. This same Uwais was alive with Imam Ali (A), and during the battle of Siffin said, "O my Imam, I'm here to fight with you and give my allegiance to you." The Imam asked, "Do you have any conditions for this allegiance?"

You see, at this time, people only wanted to give allegiance to get status or money from the Imam. Owais said, "O Imam, I give you my allegiance, and my whole life is for you without condition." So, on one side, Owais used to spend hours in sajdah and praying to Allah, and on the other hand, he was very, very obedient to his Imam and had a strong appreciation for the wilayah, meaning that the authority the Imam had over him. So, that's what we need to do in our lives as well.

We said there are 9 characteristics, and some of those are doing sajdah and ruku, and we said that Imam Husain (A) requested one more night to pray and read Quran. So, boys and girls, let's talk about Salaah. Salaah is our key to Jannah; it's our way to communicate with Allah. Allah gives us the opportunity to talk to him at least 5 times a day. Almost no one with an important status — no king, no powerful president, or celebrity – would ever give us one appointment, let alone 5 appointments every day!

Even on the day of Ashura, at every excuse Imam Husain (A) had, he would recite parts of the Quran and remind the enemies of the verses of the Quran. He would stop after fighting and say la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah – there is no power or strength except Allah. When he would hear about a companion who became Shaheed, he would say:

مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّـهَ عَلَيْهِ

Among the Believers are men who have kept their promise to Allah. (33:23)

Any excuse he had, Imam Husain (A) was teaching everyone that our lives have to be connected to Salaah and the Quran. And on the day of Ashura, when it was Salaah time, what happened? At Dhuhr time, his companions were still alive. The Imam could have gone back to his tent and prayed. He could have sent others to fight and take turns praying. But his Salaah on that day was really, really special. First, in the midst of war, the Imam stopped everything to pray on time. He could have waited until near Maghrib, but the moment it was time for Salaah, he prayed. There's a little saying – don't tell your Salaah you have stuff to do, tell your stuff you have Salaah to do. In the Adhaan, we say hayya 'alaa khayril amal - hurry towards the best deed.

Sometimes, when people text or call us, we stop what we're doing and look and respond. Well, this is Allah calling us. So, one of the things we should give importance to is prayer and praying on time. There are many ahadith that tell us if you pray on time, so many doors of barakah and blessings will open for you.

The second lesson we see is that the Imam prayed in jama'ah. Everyone prayed together. Now, the jama'ah in a war is done somewhat differently than how we pray. The prayer is shorter, and is done in a special way so that everyone is protected from attacks. But it is still in jama'ah.

The third lesson we see is that he prayed in front of everyone. He didn't go into his tent, but instead he prayed in front of everyone and was very proud of this Salaah. Now of course you don't have to go out and pray in public all the time, but Imam Husain (A) was reminding the enemies that he is offering Salaah, and they're fighting someone who believes in Allah, prays, follows Islam, and is in reality their Imam. He prayed in the middle of the desert of Karbala. He was giving a message that we have to establish the Salaah no matter where we are.

This connection with Allah is our lives. We don't just recite Salaah — we live Salaah. So, we see that we need to try to pray on time and give importance to it. Alllah tells us in the Quran that Salaah keeps us away from shameful and unjust deeds:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنكَرِ

Surely, Salaah prevents indecency and wrongdoing (29:45)

How does Salaah keep us away from bad deeds? It reminds us 5 times a day that we are created to make good choices in whatever time we have left in this world. Allah says:

وَالْعَصْرِ ۝١ إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝٢ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

[I swear] by time, surely mankind is in loss, except those who believe and do good deeds and invite others towards to the truth and invite others towards patience. (103:1-3)

In this surah, Allah swears that all of mankind — everyone — is a loser. Everyone, that is, except those who have 4 characteristics. What are these 4 characteristics? They believe, they do good deeds, they help each other to the Truth, and they have patience. So, boys and girls, for 9 nights, we've sat here and listened. Now, it's time for us to have a change in our hearts. Let's give Salaah importance from tonight. Let's try to make our priorities right, and let's remember every time we stand for Salaah to make good choices until the next Salaah.

Museebah:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

It is the afternoon of Ashura in Karbala.

Imam Husain (A) stands all alone on the plains of an empty desert, his cloak gently flapping in the whistling wind. Close to him, his young daughter stands, guarding her eyes from the blowing sands. She follows the gentle turn of his gaze: first, it turns towards the river, resting on the body of his beloved brother; it turns towards the tents, and finds the body of his son; it glances across the plains, his breath catching as he sees the bodies of his companions, brothers, nephews, and sons.

Watching Imam Husain (A), tears begin to spill from her eyes.

If you asked her how much she loves her Baba, she would tell you more than all the stars in the sky. If you asked her how she feels when she holds her Baba's hand, she would tell you she feels like nothing in the world can hurt her. If you asked her what it's like to hear her Baba's voice, she would tell you that when he says, I love you, my sweet daughter, it feels like her heart is smiling. If you asked her when she is the happiest, she would tell you that it is when her Baba picks her up in his arms and lifts her towards the sky.

If you asked her what hurts her the most, it is seeing her Baba cry.

She watches as Imam Husain (A) turns towards the camp and calls out, "O Sakina! O Ruqayya! O Fatima! O Zaynab!

O Umm Kulthum! My salaam be upon you all!"

Her heart begins to pound furiously inside her chest. She cries out, "O dear Father! Are you going to die?" Imam Husain (A) responds, "What other ending could there be for someone who does not have any helper or supporter?" If her Baba leaves her all alone in this desert, to whom will she turn? Every person who has left this camp has not returned. She remembers every last hug, and every last kiss from her family members who have left. And she knows that none of them will return to hug or kiss her again.

And now, her Baba is preparing to leave?

She turns to her father, "O Father! Please return us back to the city of Rasulullah!" She thinks of the grave of her great-grandfather Prophet Muhammad (S). Maybe they would be safe there from all of this horror. Why do these people continue to kill them? How can they call themselves Muslim, while coming to kill the children of the Prophet themselves?

Imam Husain (A) hugs his young daughter, holding her close to his chest. She takes in the sweet smell from his shirt and she cannot stop crying; it smells like roses, and she holds onto his neck tightly with her small hands. I love you, my Baba! I cannot live without you!

She watches as her Baba gets on his horse, and she wishes that she could hold onto the horse's leg to stop him from leaving. They are going to kill my father, please don't take my father away from me…

As Imam Husain (A) rides away from her, tears spill rapidly down her face. She hears him say, "O God! It is You who I trust in my sadness. You are my only hope in all this violence. You are my shelter in everything that happens to me." She has a great sadness in her heart, and she does not know how she will survive without her Baba near her side. Not only because Imam Husain (A) is her father, but because he is also her Imam. He is the leader Allah (swt) put on earth to guide them to the path that would lead everyone back to Him.

But at the same time, she feels a sudden rush of pride, watching how strong, how noble he looks as he enters the battlefield. She is Sakina bintul Husain ibn Ali! She is the great granddaughter of the Prophet, and even in the middle of such grief, she will not let the enemy defeat her. She will not bow her head in front of them. She will remain standing tall, just like she sees her Baba standing tall now.

Imam Husain (A) – the most glorious lion, charges into a battlefield of sheep. He moves left, the enemy scatters right; he moves right, the enemy scatters left. In such sadness even, this lion has not been weakened; his blood is strengthened by the pain that pulses through his veins. The shadow of death has not broken his roar; it rings loudly into the sky. "I am the son of 'Ali from the Bani Hashim, and this honor is enough for me…my grandfather is the Prophet of Allah, the best among all!"

Hundreds upon hundreds of enemies fall at the strike of Imam Husain's (A) sword. The enemy is left in awe at the strength of this son of the Lion of God. In a panic, more archers are signaled to come forward, more swordsmen are prepared. Arrows are released, darkening the sky like angry clouds, a storm falling upon Imam Husain (A). Spears strike with savagery, piercing the body of the truest servant of Allah (swt).

Blood falls in streams, and a loud cry is heard from the depths of the desert sands. A stone is flung towards his forehead, and as he pauses to wipe the blood from his eyes, a poisoned arrow is shot, piercing his chest. The vicious wolves begin to circle, their teeth bared, snarling grins splayed across their faces. A lance is thrust forward, and Imam Husain (A) falls from the horse's back onto the ground.

The tears choke in grief! The eyes shed blood! The heart is shattered! History watches in agony as a sword strikes and the earth quakes, severing the neck of the bravest soul. The head of Sayyid ush Shuhada is lifted high on a spear, and the hearts of all who love him are taken with it. A call echoes through the skies: "By Allah! The Imam, son of an

Imam, brother of an Imam, and father of the Imams, al-Husain ibn Ali has been killed!"

At that moment, a dust storm descends on the land of Karbala bringing with it an intense darkness, as all that is left is the blood-red fury of the sky…

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After the murder of her father, Sakina feels all the life leave her small body. For her, nothing remains in this world if it does not contain her father, Imam Husain.

She watches in horror as the enemy comes towards the tents. They attack the women, stealing away their belongings. The men chase them around with spears and set fire to the tents. All She hears are screams. She, too, screams out – My Baba! ya Husain! My Uncle! ya Abbas! Where can I run to escape? When I was scared, I would run to your arms…whose arms should I find run to for safety now?

In the next days, the enemy takes the women and children prisoner, along with Imam Zain ul-Abideen, the son of Imam Husain (A) who has fallen very sick. When they leave Karbala, the enemy ensures that they walk past the bodies of those who have been killed.

When the orphaned daughter sees the body of her father, she falls upon it and puts her face against his chest. She clings on to him so tightly, that there is none who can remove her from his side. But the cruelty of the enemy knows no bounds, and one from among them comes and separates her from him.

It is a long journey ahead of them, which takes those who remain through the streets of Kufa. The holy heads of those who were killed in Karbala are mounted on spears, and they are carried through the alleyways for all to see. She watches as her father's head is raised high. She looks at his face and she cannot stop the tears from her eyes. In her heart, she cries:

they are making us walk through the streets
and people are laughing as we pass by, Baba
they throw dust and stones in our direction
don't they know whose children we are, Baba?
they taunt us with my brother Ali Akbar's head on a spear
don't they know that face is the face of the Prophet, Baba?
they treat us like prisoners then hurry to prayer
calling adhaan with our grandfather's name, Baba…

All through the suffering of Kufa, and until the caravan reaches Shaam, the palace of the evil ruler Yazeed, she speaks to her father in her heart. At such a young age, she is able to understand the importance of who the Imam of the time is. As soon as he comes to bid her farewell, her heart already begins to shake, anxious at the distance that will be between them. And after he is killed, it is impossible for her to remain content on this earth. In each moment, she is thinking about him. With each breath, she is calling his name. It has only been a few weeks since she last smelled his fragrance, but it fills her every dream. In a few weeks, she has lived lifetimes of pain.

So what of us? We, who live today, but who have been separated from the Imam of our time – not just for weeks, but for hundreds upon hundreds of years? Do we feel the same restlessness in our hearts as she did? Do we, too, crave his sweet smell? Do we also weep and cry in the early mornings and the late hours of the night, wondering which land or soil it is that carries him? Do we not feel the same grief that we can see and speak to all that is created, but we cannot see and speak to him? If our hearts are not in a similar condition of brokenness, then it is as if we are looking into Karbala's eyes, and Karbala is looking into ours with a sigh – you weep for my Husain's loneliness, yet leave lonely the Husain of your time.

One night in Shaam, she wakes suddenly from a dream. She says, "Where is my father that I have seen just now?" Hearing this, the women and the other children begin to weep. When the tyrant Yazeed hears this noise he wakes from his sleep and says, "Who is crying and wailing so loudly?!" After searching, he is told that it is coming from the daughter of Imam Husain (A). He orders, "Take her father's head to her!"

They cover the holy head of Imam Husain (A) with a piece of cloth and bring it to her. When she removes the cover, she cries out, "O Father! Who has dyed you with your blood? Who has cut the vein of your neck? Who has orphaned me in my childhood? After you, to whom should I tie my heart? Who will raise your orphan? Who is the caretaker of these women and prisoners! […] I wish I had been buried under the dirt instead of seeing your beard dyed in your blood!"

She cries and cries until she falls unconscious. As much as those around her try, they cannot wake her up – until they realize that her soul has left her body and is now rising to the sky. This young daughter who could not live without her father, has been freed from this world, and for the first time since that day he hugged her goodbye in Karbala, her heart smiles – at last, she is reunited with her Baba once more.

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